

To The Honorable Members of the Tennessee State Legislature:

We are calling on our state lawmakers to pass legislation to prevent gun thefts from vehicles and to work with gun owners and dealers to ensure that their guns do not end up in the hands of the wrong people.

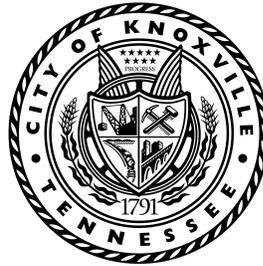
Gun thefts from vehicles are occurring in staggering numbers across the state of Tennessee. The Metropolitan Nashville Police Department reported 121 guns as being stolen from Nashville vehicles already this year. More than 70% of ALL guns reported stolen in and around Nashville in 2023 thus far were reported as being stolen from vehicles. Cities like Nashville (+14%), Memphis (+23%), Chattanooga (+24%), and Knoxville (+36%) all experienced notable increases in gun thefts from cars from 2019 to 2020—the most recent year for which NIBRS data is available.<sup>1</sup>

[Research](#) shows gun thefts often divert guns into an underground market where people with dangerous histories are easily able to obtain access. That is why stolen guns are often recovered at crime scenes, including at the scenes of homicides and other violent crimes. In fact, [the majority](#) of the 23,000 stolen firearms recovered by police across the US between 2010 and 2016 were recovered in connection with crimes, including more than 1,500 violent acts.

Requiring secure storage of unattended firearms in cars and mandating reporting of lost or stolen guns to local law enforcement can reduce underground gun sales and illegal gun trafficking. [Research](#) has found that mandatory-reporting laws for lost and stolen guns were associated with a 46 percent reduction in traced illegal gun movement when compared to states without such laws.

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<sup>1</sup> Everytown Analysis of NIBRS data from 2011-2020, accessed December 2021 from: <https://crime-data-explorer.app.cloud.gov/pages/downloads>



This is why we strongly support Tennessee's H.B.1233 and S.B.1029 which would help prevent guns from falling into the wrong hands by requiring secure storage of unattended firearms in motor vehicles and boats.

The bill also establishes a misdemeanor criminal penalty for failing to lock and store a gun and ammunition or for failing to report a lost or stolen gun to law enforcement, punishable only by completing a court-approved firearms safety course.

As your partners in municipal government, we ask that our state leaders provide us with the tools necessary to combat this ever-growing crisis of guns stolen from vehicles. The passage of H.B. 1233 and S.B. 1029 will provide local leaders with the tools to prevent senseless violence and crime in our communities. Thank you for standing with mayors in this work.

**Honorable Mayor John Cooper of Nashville**

**Honorable Mayor Lee Harris of Shelby County**

**Honorable Mayor Tim Kelly of Chattanooga**

**Honorable Mayor Indya Kincannon of Knoxville**