

Chicago sues automakers over cars being stolen

By [Jazz Shaw](#)

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For several years now, Chicago’s spiraling crime rates have featured a shocking increase in the number of vehicular thefts and carjackings. The Chicago Police Department recorded an increase in car thefts from 9,000 to 21,000 in just the past three years. Among the most popular cars to steal are Kias and Hyundais, possibly because they are the easiest to break into and drive away. In response, the city’s new anti-cop mayor, Brandon Johnson, has decided to finally do something about it. Will he be sending out the police to arrest the thieves and break up the criminal gang? Don’t be silly. Of course not. He’s filing a lawsuit against Kia and Hyundai, claiming that their cars are too easy to steal. (I only wish I was kidding about this.) The following is [from our colleague Julio Rosas at Townhall](#).

Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson (D) announced on Thursday the city is suing automakers Kia and Hyundai for “their failure to include industry-standard engine immobilizers in multiple models of their vehicles,” which according to the city, is the reason for the high rate of crimes involving cars.

“The impact of car theft on Chicago residents can be deeply destabilizing, particularly for low- to middle-income workers who have fewer options for getting to work and taking care of families. The failure of Kia and Hyundai to install basic

auto-theft prevention technology in these models is sheer negligence, and as a result, a citywide and nationwide crime spree around automobile theft has been unfolding around our eyes,” Johnson said in a statement.

Since 2016, there has been a requirement by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration that American automobiles include certain anti-theft technology. But those requirements [also include exemptions](#) that allow manufacturers to omit that feature on some of their most affordable product lines if its inclusion would drive up the cost unreasonably. This has benefitted some manufacturers like Kia as well as consumers.

But that’s not really the issue in Chicago, is it? The problem isn’t that the Kias and Hyundais are too easy to steal. It’s that the city has too many car thieves. Chicago’s gangs have turned car theft into a more popular sport than tennis or golf. And they don’t just steal cars to sell them, though that’s very popular to be sure. Sometimes they just steal them for use in other crimes such as drive-by shootings.

There is very little disincentive for the gangs to steal cars. It’s not only profitable, but you will rarely spend any time in jail for doing it. In fact, Chicago [formally removed](#) the ability for juvenile car thieves to be prosecuted as felons, ensuring that almost all of them are immediately put back out on the streets. For that reason, the gangs have been increasingly relying on younger members to steal cars.

One other point about the anti-theft technology is worth bringing up here. Cars with those features are only protected when they are parked and the keys are not available. So the more cars with anti-theft features there are on the streets, the more likely the gangbangers will be to simply carjack someone while the vehicle is running. And the city has seen [an explosion of carjackings](#) in the past three years. Making matters worse, the Chicago PD recovered less than 10% of carjacked vehicles last year.

If Brandon Johnson was being honest, he would admit that Kia and Hyundai are not at fault for all of this vehicular theft. The people stealing the cars are to blame. And with enough resources and the backing of the administration, the Chicago PD could get the gangs back under control. But that’s clearly not going to happen under the Johnson administration. So if you’re planning to visit Chicago, you’re

probably better off renting a car than bringing your own. Or perhaps a tank if you can find one.

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