



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrew J. Lanza

Local Officials Call on Hochul to Change Green Light Law, Allow Federal Access to DMV Data

ANDREW J. LANZA October 24, 2022



(STATEN ISLAND, NY) - Today Congresswoman Nicole Malliotakis (NY-11) joined Staten Island Borough President Vito Fossella, New York State Senator Andrew Lanza, and New York City Council Minority Leader Joe Borelli to call on Governor Kathy Hochul to change New York's Green Light Law to allow federal access to Department of Motor Vehicle (DMV) records to combat the recent spike in car thefts conducted by transnational criminal organizations in New York City.

New York's Green Light law **prohibits** the DMV from sharing information with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), including U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP). The only way CBP can access information is if a federal judge signs a judicial warrant or court order. Without access to DMV data, CPB is limited in its ability to see DWI charges and traffic-related misdemeanors, and cannot identify or authenticate vehicles at ports.

"New York State is the only state that restricts Customs and Border Protection access to their data across the board," **Congresswoman Malliotakis said.** "There are transitional criminal organizations that are stealing our vehicles, driving them over the bridge to New Jersey, putting them on the ports, and shipping them out to wherever there's demand. I've met with the Department of Homeland Security and Customs and Border Protection about this, and they say the lack of access to the DMV records is part of the problem. Organized crime units are forging counterfeit titles and registrations in order to get past customs and without access to DMV data, CBP does not have adequate resources to identify and authenticate vehicles at our ports."

New York City has seen a **36 percent increase** in auto grand larceny thefts since 2021, with 10,724 vehicles stolen citywide. Staten Island has seen an 85% increase in auto thefts, the largest percentage increase of all the boroughs, with 365 vehicles stolen this year. According to CBP, as of April, 115 stolen vehicles were recovered within New York City ports with approximately 74 stolen vehicles destined for various West African countries and 40 stolen vehicles headed for the Dominican Republic. These numbers are on pace to far exceed the 174 vehicles that were recovered in all of FY21.

"We live in an environment now where commonsense seems to have been let out of the barn," **said Staten Island Borough President Vito Fossella.** "Why isn't everybody at the local, state, and federal level on the same page trying to apprehend and keep in jail the people who steal cars? Unfortunately, the common denominator is the same bad people are allowed to

do the same bad thing over and over again because there are no consequences for their actions."

"Policies in New York led by people like Governor Hochul and Senate Democrats have really created a crime scene all across New York," **State Senator Andrew Lanza said.** "The Green Light law deprives the very agencies and people who are there to protect us from having the information they need to do their jobs. What is the result? We have a surge in car thefts and a surge in crime across the board. This is not a crime perception, it's crime travesty and crime crisis here in New York City."

"The auto theft zone signs and the signs in Times Square have made New York the laughing stock of the United States of America," **said New York City Council Minority Leader Joe Borelli.** "I don't know what the Governor is even thinking. I saw her do a press conference where she announced more funding for catalytic converter theft. What does that even mean? Does that mean there's a single dollar more in the 123 Precinct coffers for overtime or new cameras? No. Does it mean the Richmond County DA can hire another prosecutor to go after car thieves? No. These are all puff pieces from a puff governor who doesn't want to make the hard choices that are necessary."

Malliotakis has introduced [H.R.9107](#), the States Helping Apprehend Rogue Exports (SHARE) Act, which would require states like New York to enter into a data-sharing agreement with the Secretary of Homeland Security and the Secretary of Transportation in order to be eligible for certain port grant programs. Malliotakis has also partnered with Richmond County District Attorney Michael McMahon in [requesting](#) that the U.S. Attorneys for the Eastern District of New York, Southern District of New York, and the District of New Jersey establish a task force to assist the NYPD with the sharp rise in transnational grand theft auto crimes in New York City.

Additionally, the elected officials once again highlighted the need to fix New York's disastrous bail law that has allowed auto thieves to continue wreaking havoc on New York streets. Among suspected auto thieves, 21% were **rearrested** last year, more than twice the 10.3% recorded in 2017. The alleged **recidivism rates** for burglary and auto theft were even worse in 2020 when they were 27.1% and 26.8%.

Malliotakis added: "We're asking for Governor Hochul to restore access for the Department of Homeland Security and Customs and Border Protection to the DMV's database so they can do their jobs. It's critically important for our federal law enforcement to have access to this data. The Green Light Law, coupled with New York's radical bail law has been a disaster for public safety and it's truly the cause of why we're seeing such a sharp uptick in car thefts across our community."