



DAVID CRAIG

STATE SENATOR

Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety
January 29, 2020
Senate Bill 656
Senator David Craig

Chairman Wanggaard and members of the Committee, thank you for taking the time to hear my testimony on Senate Bill 656.

As you are aware, online shopping and home delivery of consumer products is a sector of the economy that has grown at exponential rates nationally over the last several years. Unfortunately, as more and more Wisconsinites conduct their shopping online, criminals have sought to use the home delivery of goods to their advantage. So-called "porch pirates" will drive around neighborhoods to steal packages from doorsteps or enter mail rooms at apartment buildings to steal packages en masse. Because of the way statutes are currently written, "porch pirates" are able to evade prosecution which fits the seriousness of the crime.

While mail theft and theft are illegal under current law, the act of stealing multiple packages from multiple property owners cannot be considered as one charge. Additionally, the theft charge is tied to the value of the property stolen. Because property delivered after online shopping can range anywhere in value from \$1 to thousands of dollars, and "porch pirates" are often unaware of the contents of each package, they steal large amounts of packages in a single course of conduct hoping to hit the jackpot. Senate Bill 656 would allow prosecutors to charge individuals engaged in this behavior based on the number of packages stolen during a course of conduct as opposed to the current limited charging options for this type of behavior that often result in a slap on the wrist.

This legislation simply modifies Wisconsin statutes to keep up with current consumer and criminal trends. Tying the severity of charges to the number of packages stolen will give prosecutors the tools to address this growing crime in our communities.

Thank you for hearing my testimony.



Rob Hutton

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 13TH ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

January 29, 2020

To: The Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety
From: Rep. Rob Hutton
Re: Senate Bill 656

Thank you Chairman Wanggaard and members of The Senate Committee on Judiciary and Public Safety for hearing AB 656 today.

More shoppers than ever before are skipping the lines at brick and mortar stores instead choosing to shop from the convenience of their homes. Consumers spent \$7.4 billion on Black Friday this year alone, amounting to the second largest internet-shopping day in history. In 2019, online sales are up 20% over last year.

Unfortunately, this trend has also led to the rise of so-called “porch pirates” – thieves who steal delivered packages from a person’s doorstep. According to a recent study, as many as one in four people have had a package stolen from their residence.

Our laws should keep up with the shift in consumer trends and the resulting criminal trends. Under current law, it is illegal to steal mail or any other item. However, while the act of theft is in current statute, the act of stealing multiple items from multiple residences cannot be considered under the same charge. Repeat criminals are often released after paying a small court fee because the value of the packages stolen falls below the threshold of more serious theft offenses.

This bill will create a penalty for individuals who steal packages from porches and other locations near a residence. It also allows for multiple package thefts to be charged as one crime if they occur as a course of action. It further clarifies that theft of any package or piece of mail delivered by any carrier to any building would be charged as mail theft.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.