

May 16, 2017

The Honorable Jeff Barker, Chair  
Oregon House Judiciary Committee  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Mr. Barker and House Judiciary Committee Members:

The summer of 2005 I had just graduated from college and I bought my first car, a maroon 1990 Toyota Camry. Only a few months later my car was stolen out of my apartment complex's parking lot in NW Portland sometime during the night. I called the police and made a report when I discovered it was missing the following morning. Later that day the police called and informed me that they'd found my car, which had been towed to a private tow lot. Apparently whoever had stolen the car had driven it around and then ditched it in another apartment complex's parking lot, which resulted in it being towed because it didn't have a permit for that lot. The police informed me that the towing fees were my responsibility, and the police would not pay for the towing or allow me to get my car back without paying the fee.

As soon as I hung up with the police, I went to the tow lot to collect my car and was told I owed them \$200 for the towing and a day's storage. Having just graduated from college, this was a lot of money. I asked them what would happen if I wasn't able to pay the \$200 right then and they said that I'd have a daily storage fee would be added on to the total each day until I picked the car up. Fortunately I was able to borrow money from my parents to pay the \$200 and to buy a new car battery, which the thieves had stolen. If I hadn't been so fortunate to find out about the theft the morning after it occurred and to have family willing and able to lend me money, I easily could have lost my car to the tow lot. Worse, I'd bought my car for \$1800, so if my car had been at the tow lot for very long, I likely would have lost my car and owed the towing company money on top of that. This simply is no way to treat a victim of a crime.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Laura Mandell".

Laura Mandell