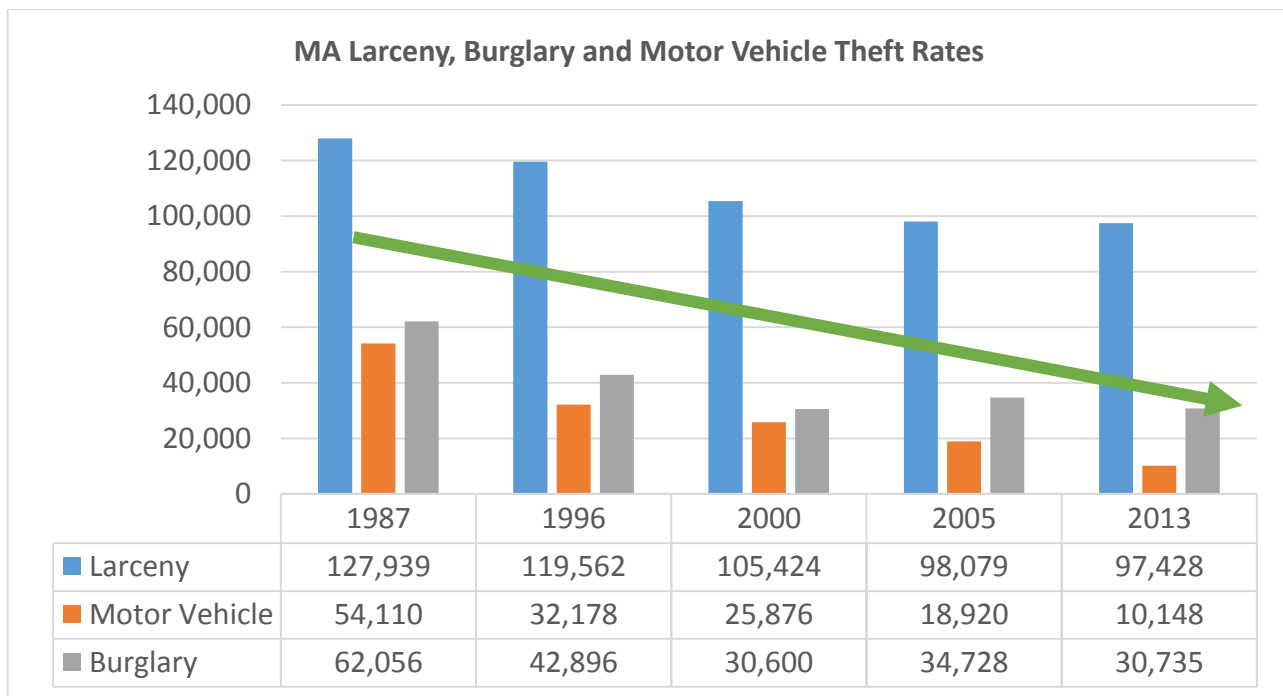


## SENATE BILL 2176 -- \$1,500 LARCENY FELONY THRESHOLD

An increase in the amount needed to trigger a felony in larceny prosecutions is long overdue. The present \$250 threshold is unjust because it captures many low level offenses and makes felons of countless people. Any felony carries a heavy stigma, creates barriers to jobs, and contributes to reliance on public assistance. There also is a 10 year waiting period to seal criminal records for low level offenses because they are classified as felonies. Increasing the threshold to \$1500 would help many young people and numerous others who are trapped in poverty and unemployment for what were actually low level offenses.

- Massachusetts is an outlier with an outdated \$250 threshold enacted in 1987.
- Every state in the U.S. has a higher amount except New Jersey (\$200) and Virginia (\$200).
- All New England states have higher thresholds for felony larceny than Massachusetts.  
Conn. \$2000 • Rhode Island \$1500 • Maine \$1000 • New Hampshire \$1000 • Vermont \$900
- Other examples: \$2500 in Texas & Wisconsin. \$2000: Colorado, PA, South Carolina. \$1500: Delaware, Georgia, Montana, Nebraska, Utah. \$1,000 in Arizona, Arkansas, District of Columbia, Idaho, Minnesota, Mississippi, Michigan, Maryland, Kansas, Iowa, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, New York, West Virginia.



Sources: MA State Police Uniform Crime Reports and MA Department of Corrections.

The argument that crime will increase if thresholds are increased is a myth and not backed by crime statistics.

- All crime rates related to larceny have declined in Massachusetts since the last time the felony threshold for larceny was increased from \$100 to \$250 in 1987. If the logic of such an argument held true, larceny rates would not have decreased in Massachusetts.
- Research on other states that have increased felony thresholds has shown that increasing thresholds does not increase crime. Pew Charitable Trust, The Effects of Changing State Theft Penalties (Feb. 2016).  
<http://www.pewtrusts.org>
- There is no incentive to commit crime under SB 2176. Jail sentences remain, fines are increased to parallel the \$1,500 threshold, and there is a higher threshold of \$250 for warrantless arrests by police for shoplifting.

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