



## Fight Rising Catalytic Converter Theft *Cosponsor the Bipartisan PART Act (H.R. 6394)*

### ISSUE

Catalytic converters are being stolen at increasingly higher rates due to their valuable metals, such as rhodium, platinum and palladium. Thieves can easily steal catalytic converters from unattended vehicles, and since catalytic converters are not readily traceable, there is a lucrative market for these stolen parts. These thefts are costing millions of dollars to businesses and individual vehicle owners alike. In addition, replacing a catalytic converter is costly and often difficult due to the part's skyrocketing demand and supply chain shortages. **Congress should pass H.R. 6394, the "Preventing Auto Recycling Theft Act" (PART Act), which would assist law enforcement in their efforts to combat catalytic converter theft by marking catalytic converters and creating a more transparent market that deters its theft.**

### BACKGROUND

As required by the Clean Air Act, catalytic converters reduce toxic emissions from internal combustion engine vehicles. Valuable precious metals in the catalytic converter remove many toxic elements from the exhaust gases as they exit the vehicle. The price of these precious metals has risen sharply, making catalytic converters a prime target for theft. The number of catalytic converter thefts reported in insurance company claims has sharply increased over the past three years, and the National Insurance Crime Bureau estimates that these thefts increased by 326% in 2020 and increased another 353% in 2021. Stolen catalytic converters can garner anywhere from \$20 to \$350 on the black market, and the replacement cost to vehicle owners can be as high as \$2,500.

Catalytic converters are easy to steal, but generally very difficult to trace to a specific vehicle, allowing them to be easily sold on the black market. The lack of traceable identifying marks makes the theft of catalytic converters difficult to curb. Several states have enacted laws to combat this crime, including Minnesota which created a grant program to etch vehicle identification numbers (VINs) onto catalytic converters, and North Carolina which made catalytic converter theft a felony. However, because this crime frequently involves trafficking stolen parts across state lines, a federal framework is needed to aid the efforts of local law enforcement.

The PART Act includes a \$7 million grant program through which certain entities can voluntarily stamp VINs, or other identifiers, onto the catalytic converters of vehicles already on the road at no cost to vehicle owners. Dealers are specifically eligible to utilize this grant program. The bill also requires new vehicles to have unique, traceable identifying numbers stamped on catalytic converters at the time of assembly. Additionally, the bill increases record keeping requirements for purchasers and establishes a federal criminal penalty for the theft, sale, trafficking or known purchase of stolen catalytic converters of up to five years in jail.

### KEY POINTS

- **Catalytic converter theft has skyrocketed over the past few years due to the rising cost precious metals contained in each device.** According to the National Insurance Crime Bureau, the number of catalytic converter thefts reported in claims to insurance companies increased by 326% in 2020 and increased another 353% in 2021.
- **Catalytic converters are not currently one of the 11 classes of vehicle parts required to be marked with a VIN or number traceable to a VIN.** Such tracing would help deter the theft and trafficking of stolen catalytic converters.
- **H.R. 6394 provides a national framework to help law enforcement combat catalytic converter theft.** There are currently over 100 state bills addressing catalytic converter thefts, but since this crime frequently involves trafficking stolen parts across state lines, a federal standard is needed to help law enforcement.

### STATUS

H.R. 6394 was introduced by Rep. Jim Baird (R-Ind.). Rep. Betty McCollum (D-Minn.) is the lead Democratic cosponsor. Currently there is no companion Senate legislation. On May 16, in conjunction with National Police Week, NADA and 14 other trade associations sent a [letter](#) to House Energy and Commerce Committee leadership in support of the PART Act. **Members should cosponsor H.R. 6394 to help curb the growing national problem of catalytic converter theft.**

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