



State of Wisconsin
2025 - 2026 LEGISLATURE

LRB-1985/1
CMH:amn

2025 BILL

AN ACT *to amend* 971.19 (2); *to create* 165.985, 943.20 (5), 943.50 (6) and 971.36 (5) of the statutes; **relating to:** theft crimes, grants to target theft crimes, and providing a penalty.

Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau

Under current law, the penalty for the crime of theft of property and the penalty for retail theft varies from a Class A misdemeanor to a Class F felony based on the value of the property taken. The bill provides that, if a defendant commits more than one violation of theft of property or more than one violation of retail theft in a six-month period, the value of the property taken at each violation may be aggregated as one crime to determine the classification of the crime. The bill specifies that if the value is aggregated for crimes that occur in different jurisdictions, the crime may be tried in any jurisdiction in which the theft was committed.

The bill also requires the Department of Justice to award grants to district attorneys, law enforcement agencies, and counties for the purpose of forming task forces to improve how they respond to, investigate, and prosecute theft crimes.

Because this bill creates a new crime or revises a penalty for an existing crime, the Joint Review Committee on Criminal Penalties may be requested to prepare a report.

The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate and assembly, do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. 165.985 of the statutes is created to read:

165.985 Grants for task forces to target theft crimes. (1) The department of justice shall award grants to district attorneys, law enforcement agencies, and counties for the purpose of forming task forces to improve response to, investigation of, and prosecution of organized retail theft crimes, vehicle and vehicle accessory theft crimes, and cargo theft crimes.

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(2) District attorneys, law enforcement agencies, and counties may apply to the department of justice for grants under this section. The department of justice shall give priority for grant awards to applicants who demonstrate that theft crimes have had a detrimental impact on a neighborhood, region, jurisdiction, or other local area.

(3) The department of justice shall submit an annual report to the cochairpersons of the joint committee on finance providing an account of the grants awarded under this section and the expenditures made with the grant moneys.

SECTION 2. 943.20 (5) of the statutes is created to read:

943.20 (5) AGGREGATION OF VALUES. For purposes of charging and penalty determinations under sub. (3) (a) to (cm), the value of property from multiple violations committed by the same person in a 6-month period may be aggregated.

SECTION 3. 943.50 (6) of the statutes is created to read:

943.50 (6) For purposes of charging and penalty determinations under sub. (4) (a) to (c), the value of property from multiple violations committed by the same person in a 6-month period may be aggregated.

SECTION 4. 971.19 (2) of the statutes is amended to read:

971.19 (2) Where 2 or more acts are requisite to the commission of any offense or if 2 or more violations of s. 943.20 or 943.50 are prosecuted as a single crime as provided in s. 971.36 (5), the trial may be in any county in which any of such acts occurred.

SECTION 5. 971.36 (5) of the statutes is created to read:

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971.36 (5) In any case involving aggregated acts under s. 943.20 (5) or 943.50 (6), notwithstanding sub. (3), the acts may be prosecuted as a single crime.

(END)