

1                   **RESOLUTION ON RAISING FELONY THEFT THRESHOLDS**

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3   **Summary:**

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5   This Resolution supports raising felony theft thresholds, as many current state  
6   felony theft thresholds were set years or decades ago, and have not been updated to  
7   reflect economic growth nor changes in the value of consumer goods. For example, a  
8   felony theft of \$1,000 in 1985 is equal to more than twice that in 2015 dollars.  
9   Further, research shows that higher thresholds do not impact property crime nor  
10   larceny rates. Additionally, as states raise thresholds, these dollar values should be  
11   indexed to a formula-based inflation measure. Raising felony theft thresholds would  
12   continue to protect the public while preventing overcriminalization and  
13   unnecessary prison sentences. It is vital that we focus costly prison beds on those  
14   who pose a danger to society rather than nonviolent offenders sentenced under  
15   decades-old felony theft standards.

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17   **Model Resolution:**

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19   **WHEREAS**, the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) is committed to  
20   developing effective criminal justice policies that hold offenders accountable while  
21   maximizing results for public safety, victims, and taxpayers; and

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23   **WHEREAS**, many state felony theft thresholds were set years or decades ago and  
24   have not been adjusted for inflation; and

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26   **WHEREAS**, since 2000, at least 35 states have increased their felony theft  
27   thresholds; currently, six states have a threshold of \$2000 or higher, nine have a  
28   threshold of \$1500, and 19 have a threshold of \$1000; and,

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30   **WHEREAS**, increasing felony thresholds has not been show to result in higher  
31   property crime or larceny rates; and

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33   **WHEREAS**, the states that raised their thresholds since 2001 reported nearly the  
34   same average declines in property crime and larceny as the states that did not make  
35   changes; and

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37   **WHEREAS**, felony offenses typically have a penalty of at least one year in a state  
38   prison, while a misdemeanor typically results in jail time or probation; and

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40   **WHEREAS**, prison sentences have not been shown to be a more cost-efficient or  
41   effective way to deal with many low-level nonviolent offenders as compared to  
42   alternatives to incarceration; and

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44   **WHEREAS**, prison beds should be primarily focused on those who pose a danger to  
45   society,

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47 **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that jurisdictions should review their felony theft  
48 thresholds.

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50 **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that jurisdictions should raise their felony theft  
51 threshold and index that threshold to a formula-based inflation measure to be  
52 adjusted at regular intervals.