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NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AG Kaul Announces Multistate Settlement with Hyundai and Kia for Their Sales of Vehicles Lacking Anti-Theft Technology

As a result of the settlement, Hyundai and Kia will offer free hardware fix for all affected vehicles that will help prevent further thefts and protect public safety

MADISON, Wis. – Attorney General Josh Kaul today announced that Wisconsin, along with 35 other attorneys general, has reached a settlement with automobile manufacturers Hyundai and Kia over their sale of millions of vehicles nationwide that lacked widely used anti-theft technology. This failure resulted in an epidemic of car thefts across the country. Under the settlement, Hyundai and Kia have agreed to:

- Equip all future vehicles sold in the United States with engine immobilizer anti-theft technology;
- Offer free zinc-reinforced ignition cylinder protectors to owners or lessees of eligible vehicles, including vehicles that previously were only eligible for the companies' software updates;
- Provide up to \$4.5 million in restitution to eligible consumers whose cars are damaged by thieves; and
- Pay \$4.5 million to the states to defray the costs of the investigation.

“This resolution will help limit the harm from the manufacture of these vehicles without anti-theft immobilizers,” said Attorney General Josh Kaul. “I encourage those who are eligible to benefit from this agreement.”

Through this settlement, consumers with eligible vehicles can have zinc-reinforced ignition cylinder protectors installed on their vehicle free of charge.

Eligible consumers will have one year from the date of notice from the companies to make an appointment to have the zinc-reinforced ignition cylinder protector installed at their local Hyundai or Kia authorized dealerships. ***Eligible consumers are urged to schedule the installation of the zinc-reinforce ignition cylinder protector as soon as possible.***

In addition, consumers who previously installed the software update on their vehicles (or were scheduled to do so) but nonetheless experienced a theft or attempted theft of their vehicle on or after April 29, 2025 are eligible to file a claim for restitution for certain theft and attempted-theft related expenses. For more information about eligibility and how to submit a claim for compensation from Hyundai or Kia, please visit the following website:

www.HKMultistateimmobilizersettlement.com

Many of Hyundai and Kia's Vehicles Lacked Widely Used Anti-Theft Technology.

Hyundai and Kia did not include anti-theft “engine-immobilizer” technology in millions of their vehicles sold throughout the United States, including in Wisconsin. An engine immobilizer prevents thieves from starting a vehicle’s engine without the vehicle’s “smart” key, which stores the vehicle’s electronic security code. According to one report, in 2015, only 26% of the vehicles Kia and Hyundai sold in the United States were equipped with engine immobilizers, compared to 96% of the vehicles sold by other manufacturers.

States Across the Country, Including Wisconsin, Experienced a Drastic Increase in Hyundai and Kia Vehicle Thefts.

Car thieves devised a quick and simple way to access these vehicles’ ignition cylinders and start these cars without a key, which quickly went viral, leading to a drastic, nationwide increase in Kia and Hyundai vehicle thefts, during the years 2020 through 2023. Furthermore, many of the stolen vehicles were used in connection with other crimes and were involved in many traffic collisions, some fatal.

Wisconsin Led a Coalition of States Pushing the Companies to Do More.

In response to the crisis, in March 2023, AG Kaul led 22 other state attorneys general in demanding that Hyundai and Kia “step up to address the scourge of theft of vehicles they manufactured without anti-theft immobilizers.”

Hyundai and Kia’s Response to the Public Safety Crisis.

In 2023, Hyundai and Kia launched a service campaign to update the software on many affected vehicles. Hyundai and Kia also offered to install a zinc-reinforced ignition cylinder protector, but only for the roughly 20% of their vehicles that were ineligible for this software update. While the companies claimed that the software update blocked the viral theft method, the states alleged that the software update could be, and in fact was, bypassed by thieves.

The Settlement Makes Zinc-Reinforced Ignition Cylinder Protectors Available for All Affected Vehicles.

Joining Attorney General Kaul in this multistate settlement are the attorneys general of California, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Maryland, New Jersey, Nevada, and Washington. The final settlement was also joined by Arizona, Colorado, the District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota, and Vermont.