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NEWS RELEASE

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Man Charged in Four Felony Car Thefts During COVID-19 Pandemic

A South Gate man has been charged in four separate felony cases with stealing cars and hit-and-run resulting in injury over a two-month span after getting re-arrested and released, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office announced today.

Ismael Lopez (dob 01/16/97) was charged in case VA153794 with seven felony counts: two counts each of fleeing a pursuing peace officer's vehicle, driving or taking a vehicle without consent and receiving a stolen vehicle, and one count of hit-and-run driving resulting in injury.

His arraignment is scheduled for today in Department 5 of the Los Angeles County Superior Court, Downey Branch.

On June 29, Lopez was arrested by South Gate police for allegedly being in the driver's seat of a stolen van. He was released per the COVID-19 emergency bail schedule, aimed at reducing the jail population during the pandemic.

On July 1, the defendant allegedly took a person's car without their consent and fled a pursuing police officer.

After being released, Lopez is accused of receiving a stolen vehicle on July 10, then another time on July 20 for the same alleged offense. In the latter case, Lopez allegedly stole a vehicle, led police on a pursuit and broadsided another vehicle, injuring the driver. He eventually lost control of the vehicle, fled on foot and was arrested.

All of the incidents occurred in South Gate. If convicted as charged, the defendant faces a possible maximum sentence of 12 years in state prison.

The case remains under investigation by the South Gate Police Department.

About the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office

Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey leads the largest local prosecutorial office in the nation. Her staff of nearly 1,000 attorneys, 300 investigators and 800 support staff members is dedicated to protecting our community through the fair and ethical pursuit of justice and the safeguarding of crime victims' rights.