



BALTIMORE POLICE DEPARTMENT



BERNARD C. "JACK" YOUNG
Mayor

MICHAEL S. HARRISON
Police Commissioner

TO: The Honorable Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Michelle Wirzberger, Esq., Director of Government Affairs, Baltimore Police Dept.

RE: Senate Bill 646 – Public Safety – Access to Firearms – Storage Requirements

DATE: February 20, 2020

POSITION: SUPPORT

Chair Smith, Vice-Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore Police Department **supports** Senate Bill 646.

Senate Bill 646 mandates that a person may not leave a loaded or unloaded firearm in a location where an unsupervised minor could gain access to the firearm and establishes penalties for instances when an unsupervised minor does gain access to the firearm and where that access causes harm to the minor or another person.

The safe storage requirements contained in this bill will promote responsible gun ownership and prevent unsupervised minors from accessing and using firearms. This will protect children from the pain and trauma of self-inflicted and unintentional firearm injuries. In fact, an article in the *Journal of American Medical Association* pointed out that safe storage can help reduce the risk of suicide by firearm and accidental shootings among children and adolescents by 78% and 85% respectively¹.

In addition to being sound policy to directly protect children, this bill will make it more difficult for unsecured firearms to be diverted to the underground market where they could be used in violent crimes. While the Baltimore Police Department is laser focused on reducing violent crime, it needs all the help it can get to reduce the number of illegal firearms in the possession of criminals.

Therefore, we respectfully request a **favorable** report on Senate Bill 646.

¹Grossman DC, Mueller BA, Riedy C, et al. Gun Storage Practices and Risk of Youth Suicide and Unintentional Firearm Injuries. *Journal of the American Medical Association*. 2005; 293(6):707-714.