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Support

Senate Bill 1111 – *Criminal Organizations – Criminal Prohibitions, Civil Actions, and Forfeiture*

Good afternoon, Chairman Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and esteemed members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee, I am State's Attorney Aisha Braveboy, and I am writing in support of Senate Bill 1111 – amending Maryland's Organized Crime Statutes.

The Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act, known as RICO, was introduced by Congress in 1970 under 18 U.S.C. section 1961. This legislation, along with its state counterparts, has been instrumental in providing prosecutors with the necessary means to combat organized crime effectively. It eliminated the need to prove the direct involvement of mob or gang leaders in crimes.

In recent years, the landscape of organized crime in Maryland has undergone significant changes. We are witnessing the emergence of smaller, more agile criminal groups that lack the hierarchical structure traditionally associated with larger crime syndicates. These groups, often referred to as "crews," typically consist of adults who recruit minors to participate in their criminal endeavors. The adoption of Senate Bill 1111 is crucial as it would grant Maryland prosecutors additional resources to counteract these entities engaged in continuous criminal activities.

Maryland has seen a noticeable uptick in the activities of gangs or crews involved in ongoing criminal enterprises, violating state laws through carjacking, drug trafficking, and economic crimes. As State's Attorney, I am advocating for the enactment of MD Senate Bill 1111, which seeks to amend MD Crim Law § 9-801(g). This amendment aims to broaden the legal consequences for individuals who financially profit from the illicit activities of gangs or street crews. Our office has successfully prosecuted numerous cases against organized groups committing auto theft and carjacking within Prince George's County. The proposed legal modifications will bolster our efforts in prosecuting individuals and entities that financially gain from such criminal acts. For instance, establishments like Chop Shops that acquire vehicles or parts from stolen or carjacked automobiles will face stricter legal scrutiny. Furthermore, the increasing involvement of firearms in criminal offenses is a growing concern in Prince George's County. The suggested amendments would enable the prosecution of all individuals who, directly or indirectly, engage in criminal acts involving firearms on behalf of or alongside a criminal group.

To further refine Maryland's Organized Crime Statutes, we propose specific amendments to MD Criminal Law Article §9-801(g). These include the addition of provisions regarding the alteration

or falsification of vehicle identification numbers to hinder the circulation of stolen or carjacked vehicles, and the inclusion of firearm use in the execution of a crime as a qualifying offense.

The approval of Senate Bill 1111, with these amendments, will significantly improve the capability of Maryland prosecutors to pursue legal action against every member of a criminal organization, gang, or crew who profits from collective efforts to breach State law, encompassing crimes like carjacking, drug trafficking, and any offense involving the use of firearms.

For these reasons, I respectfully request your support for a favorable report on this bill.

Yours sincerely,

/S/

Aisha N. Braveboy,
State's Attorney for Prince George's County