

Subject: Support House Bill 0304: Gun Felony Act of 2024

Dear Maryland Delegates and Senators,

I am writing to urge your support for House Bill 0304, the Gun Felony Act of 2024, which proposes that stealing a firearm, regardless of its cost, should be classified as a felony offense. This crucial legislation aims to address a pressing issue concerning public safety and responsible gun ownership.

First and foremost, it is imperative to recognize that firearms are powerful tools that require responsible handling and ownership. They have the potential to cause significant harm when they fall into the wrong hands. By designating the theft of any firearm as a felony, we send a clear message that the unlawful acquisition of weapons will not be tolerated in our society.

One of the primary reasons to support this bill is to curb gun-related crimes. Firearms obtained through theft are frequently used in the commission of violent crimes, including robbery, assault, and even homicide. By imposing stricter penalties for stealing guns, we can deter potential criminals from targeting firearms and reduce the number of illegal weapons on our streets. This measure will undoubtedly enhance public safety and protect our communities.

Moreover, House Bill 0304 promotes accountability and responsible gun ownership. It reinforces the idea that firearms must be kept secure and out of the reach of unauthorized individuals. By making gun theft a felony offense, we encourage gun owners to take the necessary precautions to protect their firearms, such as storing them in secure safes or utilizing locking devices. This proactive approach ensures that stolen firearms are less likely to end up in the hands of criminals.

Opponents may argue that the value of a stolen firearm should determine the severity of the offense, but this perspective fails to consider the potential consequences of any stolen firearm. Regardless of its monetary value, a stolen gun can be used to perpetrate acts of

violence, endangering innocent lives. The goal of this bill is to prevent such scenarios and prioritize public safety over the worth of an individual firearm.

In conclusion, House Bill 0304, the Gun Felony Act of 2024, represents a significant step forward in safeguarding our communities and promoting responsible gun ownership. By making the theft of any firearm a felony offense, we send a strong message that illegal acquisition of weapons will face severe consequences. I urge you to support this vital legislation and work towards creating a safer society for all.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Roslyn Mickens

Educator