



**HB 659
Criminal Law – Theft of a Handgun**

FAVORABLE

The Maryland State Rifle & Pistol Association (MSRPA) supports HB 659, Criminal Law – Theft of a Handgun, a bill that would make the theft of a firearm a felony, rather than a misdemeanor, and increase penalties accordingly.

The MSRPA is the official National Rifle Association state organization for Maryland. The MSRPA's mission is to defend our rights in Maryland, support training in firearm safety and shooting skills through its affiliated clubs, and sponsor and sanction local competition throughout the state.

Gun thefts are a serious threat to public safety. If Maryland's leaders are serious about reducing violent crime, then our state should treat gun thefts as a serious crime, not a slap on the wrist. Governor Wes Moore has made public safety a priority and our state's attorneys, Aisha Braveboy (Prince George County) and Ivan Bates (Baltimore) recently announced proposals they say will help curb violent crime: "The ultimate goal is not to lock everyone up forever; the ultimate goal is rehabilitation," Braveboy said. "But how can you have rehabilitation without accountability? That's what we are looking for." Theft of a firearm is considered a felony in many states, including Idaho, Arizona, Ohio, Washington, and California. In 2016, California voters approved Proposition 63 by more than 63%, which among other policies moved theft of a firearm from a misdemeanor to a felony.

Thieves and criminals know that if they steal a gun, they will not be held accountable because the value of such firearm is most likely valued at less than \$1,500, and its theft is not punishable with imprisonment. The monetary value of a firearm is irrelevant when it is in the hands of someone with evil intent. We need to be committed to ensuring that our state laws are tools used to deter crime and make criminals accountable for their actions.

In previous years similar bills have been proposed and received significant favorable testimony. The MSRPA respectfully requests a FAVORABLE report on HB 659.

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