



BALTIMORE POLICE DEPARTMENT



BEARNARD C. "JACK" YOUNG
Mayor

MICHAEL S. HARRISON
Police Commissioner

TO: Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

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

RE: Senate Bill 35 – Criminal Law – Crime of Violence – Definition

POSITION: SUPPORT

Chair Smith, Vice-Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore Police Department **supports** Senate Bill 35.

Senate Bill 35 seeks to address a significant oversight in the current law which essentially creates a loophole for those engaged in the destructive drug trade. The current definition of a "crime of violence" includes all manner of crimes ranging from rape, carjacking, murder, to assault with intent to rob. It also includes the use of a firearm in the commission of a felony but specifically excludes use of a firearm while in "possession with intent to distribute a controlled dangerous substance."

The Baltimore Police Department works daily to combat violence and the proliferation of drugs in our community and we know that there is a strong connection between those who sell drugs and those who engage in violent acts-both with and without firearms.

While getting these individuals off the street remains our top priority, we need to ensure that those who are committing these serious and violent offenses, are receiving appropriately serious sentences so that they stay off the street. This bill would provide both police and prosecutors with another tool to ensure that we are able to keep our residents safe from violent drug dealers.

Therefore, we respectfully request a **favorable** report on Senate Bill 35.