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FROM THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF CRIME PREVENTION, YOUTH, AND VICTIM SERVICES

March 3, 2020

Chair William C. Smith Jr.
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Senate Bill 672/674 Criminal Law - Theft of a Handgun/Gun Theft Felony Act of 2020

POSITION: Letter of Support

Dear Chair Smith and Members of the Committee,

The Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services ("Office") is providing this letter of support for both Senate Bill 672 and Senate Bill 674 that deal with stronger penalties for theft of a firearm.

Senate Bill 672 excludes handgun theft from the general theft statute and creates a separate felony offense and penalties for theft of a handgun. Upon first conviction the individual would be eligible for a term of incarceration up to 5 years, with a two year minimum sentence. For a second or subsequent conviction, the individual would be eligible for a term of imprisonment up to 10 years, with a minimum sentence of five years.

Senate Bill 674 excludes theft of a firearm from the general theft statute and creates a separate felony offense and penalties for theft of a firearm. First conviction also carries a 5 year maximum prison sentence, with a mandatory minimum of two. For a second or subsequent conviction, the individual would be eligible for up to 10 years in prison with a mandatory minimum sentence of five years.

Both of these bills are similar to legislation introduced by the Governor, SB273: Violent Firearms Offender Act of 2020. SB 273 also set a minimum sentence for theft of a firearm.

These bills would contribute to combating the ongoing crime problem in Baltimore City. In 2018 there were 309 murders in Baltimore City, of which 273 were committed with a firearm. In 2019, there were 348 murders committed in Baltimore, of which 312 were committed with a

firearm. In addition there were 771 non-fatal shootings in 2019, an increase of 14% over the 677 in 2018.

The Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services urges a favorable report. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "V. Glenn Fueston, Jr.", with a stylized flourish at the end.

V. Glenn Fueston, Jr.
Executive Director
Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services

For all inquiries, please contact
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