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HB35- Public Safety-Firearm Telematics -Study

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Support

Good afternoon Mr. Chair and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee. For the record, I am Aisha Braveboy, State's Attorney for Prince George's County. I am testifying in support of HB 35 Public Safety-Firearm Telematics -Study. This legislation requires the Department of State Police to study and make recommendations about firearm telematics. The legislation defines firearm telematics as an electronic sensor or equipment installed on a firearm designed to track the location of the firearm if it becomes lost or stolen.

This legislation is vitally important because the ability to track firearms via smart technology will lead to the identification and prosecution of violent criminals. The technology will aid law enforcement officers in reliably identifying firearms recovered from crime scenes or used in the commission of a crime.

Additionally, this technology will assist with the growing problem of gun theft which is contributing to street violence. Often, stolen guns are not reported to law enforcement officers and end up on the black market or in the commission of a crime. The Department of Justice conducted a study of the use of firearms during the commission of a crime. The study found that approximately 1 in 5 individuals convicted of a crime reported they used an illegal or stolen firearm during the commission of the crime. The same study found an estimated 287,400 individuals who had been convicted of a crime in 2016 possessed a firearm during their offense. Among these, more than half (56%) had either stolen it (6%), found it at the scene of the crime (7%), or obtained it off the street or from the underground market (43%).

These are startling numbers which contribute to crime and directly impacts the safety of our communities. This study would help eliminate stolen firearms or those purchased on the black market from entering our communities. I strongly urge this Committee's favorable report on HB 35.