



March 4, 2020

**House Bill 1629**

**Office of the Attorney General - Firearm Crime - Study**

**House Judiciary Committee**

**Position: FAVORABLE**

Anne Arundel County **SUPPORTS** House Bill 1629 - Office of the Attorney General - Firearm Crime - Study. This Bill requires the Office of the Attorney General to study crimes committed with firearms since August 1, 2015, and report its findings to the General Assembly.

In response to the alarming trend of violent acts committed by individuals using guns as the preferred weapon of choice, County Executive Steuart Pittman appointed the Anne Arundel County Gun Violence Prevention Task Force (GVPTF) in April 2019. The task force subsequently explored the latest research, compiled relevant facts and data, identified best practices from other jurisdictions, and issued its preliminary recommendations in December 2019. Those recommendations include a broad range of fact-based proposals and intervention strategies that can be implemented at the local level to prevent gun violence before it occurs. One of the four pillars the task force focused its recommendations around was improving the use of data and governance for tracking firearms crimes.

In addition to stronger preventative actions, the GVPTF report calls for expanded public outreach and education, shared data collection and enhanced gun safety measures. The recommendations were developed through the lens of public health and reflect the growing consensus within the public health community that firearm-related deaths and injuries have reached epidemic levels. Public health organizations, academic researchers, and medical groups such as the American Public Health Association, the National Medical Association, the American Medical Association, the American College of Physicians and the American Academy of Pediatrics each have determined that gun violence is a major threat to public health which will require a public health response. The study required under this bill will enable all levels of government and local jurisdictions to better understand gun violence and better allocate resources to prevent it.

Accordingly, Anne Arundel County respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE** report on House Bill 1629.