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*Written Testimony of Katie Novotny in Support of HB0633*

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February 8, 2021

I am a member of Multiple Gun Rights organizations. Maryland Shall Issue, Associated Gun Clubs, Maryland State Rifle and Pistol Association, and the National Rifle Association. I am a certified Range Safety Officer with the NRA. I compete in multiple shooting events such as Steel Challenge, 3-gun, small bore, and vintage military rifle matches. I am an avid firearms collector. I support HB0633.

Under current law, the theft of a handgun or any firearm is treated as simple theft, generally in the \$100-\$1,500 category. The penalty for this is only 6 months imprisonment and/or a fine of \$500 for a first offense, and 1 year and/or \$500 fine for second or subsequent convictions. Therefore, stealing a firearm does not make a person a prohibited person for future lawful firearms purchases. I think that most would agree that stealing a firearm should prohibit a person from lawfully purchasing a firearm in the future.

I believe it is common sense that the theft of a firearm should be a separate crime than theft of property or services. Any theft is bad, but theft of a handgun, or any firearm is especially egregious. The only reason anyone would steal a firearm would be for nefarious purposes. The punishment must match the seriousness of the crime. With the current state of affairs with murders by handgun in this state, an increased penalty is in order.

I am not opposed to making the penalty a misdemeanor with the same sentence for a first offense rather than a felony. The bottom line is that laws for stealing firearms must have teeth, and they must be prosecuted.

Because of these reasons above, I request a favorable report.

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