



BALTIMORE POLICE DEPARTMENT



Brandon M. Scott
Mayor

Michael S. Harrison
Police Commissioner

TO: The Honorable Members of the House Judiciary Committee
FROM: Michelle Wirzberger, Esq., Director of Government Affairs, Baltimore Police Dept.
RE: House Bill 633 Gun Theft Felony Act of 2021
DATE: February 10, 2021

POSITION: SUPPORT

Chair Clippinger, Vice-Chair Atterbeary, and members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore Police Department **supports** House Bill 633.

House Bill 633 seeks to protect the public by classifying the theft of a firearm as a felony and establishes a penalty of up to 5 years imprisonment and a fine not exceeding \$1,000 for a first offense and imprisonment of up to 10 years and a fine not exceeding \$2,500 for a second or subsequent offense.

Currently, thefts of firearms are covered under the general theft statute which requires an offender to restore the owner's property or to pay the owner the value of the property. Additional penalties are government by the value of the object stolen. For instance, for an item valued up to \$1,500, the offense is considered a misdemeanor and is subject to up to 6 months imprisonment for a first offense and up to 1 year for subsequent offenses. We believe that enabling stronger penalties will help curb this illegal behavior and could have the effect of reducing non-fatal shootings, murders and aggravated assaults.

Therefore, the Baltimore Police Department respectfully requests a **favorable** report on House Bill 633. Thank you for allowing us to comment on this important piece of legislation. If you should have any questions, feel free to reach me at michelle.wirzberger@baltimorepolice.org or via telephone at 443-915-3155.