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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND

ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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SB 861

Maryland State Police Gun Center - Establishment

Good Afternoon Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Moon and Members of the Committee;

SB861, Maryland State Police Gun Center – Establishment, establishes a statewide Maryland Gun Center inside the Department of State Police (DSP). SB861 passed the Senate unanimously. It was drafted based on the recommendations of the recent Crime Firearms Study released on March 2, 2021. This study was a result of legislation passed in 2020 (HB1629/SB1047). During the twelve months that were studied, there were 9900 calls handled by 3 troopers and 4 civilians.

SB 861 provides additional support for the Maryland Gun Center including increased staffing levels. By requiring a statewide data base to track all crimes committed with firearms, staffing will need to increase to 17 investigators, 4 State Troopers and 13 civilian employees. The fiscal note estimates calls for service will increase to 20,000 calls for 2023, approximately 1200 calls per investigator.

The bill requires all law enforcement agencies to report information on any gun related crime to the Maryland Gun Center. It enacts a “one stop shop” for the screening and vetting of gun cases in Maryland to ensure that offenders are systematically held accountable.

Trooper Tim Frye, who is now retired from the State Police, was the Commander of the State's firearms enforcement center and the principal architect of the Maryland Gun Center. He is still considered the expert on the Maryland Firearms Enforcement Program. During Trooper Frye's time at the Gun Center, it was understaffed and underfunded, but still a very successful program. If we can find a way to properly staff and fund this important asset, it will be more effective going forward as we investigate the use of guns, gun violations and gun dealers. However, to truly be effective it must be a statewide data base that is mandated for all jurisdictions to participate and be held accountable for reporting.

If you have not read the Crimes Firearms Study, you can find it here:

[http://dlslibrary.state.md.us/publications/Exec/GOCPYVS/SB622Ch335\(2019\)_2020.pdf](http://dlslibrary.state.md.us/publications/Exec/GOCPYVS/SB622Ch335(2019)_2020.pdf)

Thank you for the opportunity to present SB891 and I ask for a favorable report so we can reduce gun crimes in Maryland.