



Brandon M. Scott
Mayor

BALTIMORE POLICE DEPARTMENT



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: Senate Bill 667 Baltimore Police Department – Firearm Destruction, Seizure, and Recovery – Reporting Requirement

DATE: February 23, 2022

POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT

Chair Smith, Vice-Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore Police Department **supports with amendment** Senate Bill 667.

Senate Bill 667 requires that on or before March 1st of each year and for each year through 2027, the Baltimore Police Department must report the following items to the Baltimore City Delegation to the General Assembly:

- The number of firearms destroyed, seized, or recovered during the reporting period;
- The manufacturer and type of each firearm to the extent known, including whether it is a handgun, rifle, machine gun, or shotgun:
 - Whether each firearm had a serial number;
 - The reason for the destruction of each firearm;
 - The source of each firearm, including seizure from a criminal defendant, crime evidence, agency purchase, turned in to the agency by a citizen, etc.

In addition, the report submitted on March 1, 2023 must include information regarding firearms destroyed, seized, or recovered by the Baltimore Police Department during the years 2012-2021. If the Baltimore Police Department fails to submit a required report, the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth and Victim Services is prohibited from providing any grant funds to the Department.

Overall, the Baltimore Police Department supports the reporting requirements and believes that the annual report mandated by this bill is another mechanism for transparency that informs the public and elected officials about the important work that the Department does in order to keep residents and visitors safe.

However, the Department does have concerns about the significant penalty for non-compliance that could negatively impact public safety and victim services in Baltimore City. We believe that this provision is unnecessarily punitive, and we suggest that lines 17 – 20 of page 2 of the bill be amended.

Currently, grant funding is used to develop and maintain key law enforcement programs, such as:

- sexual assault kit testing;
- sex offender registry enforcement and compliance efforts;
- home visits of registered gun offenders;
- collaboration with HIDTA and other federal agencies to target the most wanted and the most violent offenders within Baltimore City;
- officer recruitment;
- crime analytics;
- strategic coordination with the Office of the States Attorney to secure convictions of violent offenders and to address human trafficking, etc.

Additionally, it is important to note that the annual grants that BPD receives from GOCPYVS also fund a wide variety of programs and external organizations dedicated to assisting victims of crime, such as the Baltimore Child Abuse Center and Mercy Medical Center. A complete list of the grants can be found in the attached report that we submit to the General Assembly annually. We are concerned that, in the event of an unforeseen administrative or operational delay in submitting this report, it would jeopardize the funding of these critical programs and negatively impact public safety in Baltimore.

Therefore, the Baltimore Police Department respectfully requests a **favorable with amendment** report on Senate Bill 667.