



VICTIM SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD

February 16, 2022

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.
Chair, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Support - SB387 - Public Safety - Untraceable Firearms

Dear Chairman Smith:

Senate Bill 387 addresses the need to monitor and control the use of “do-it-yourself” (DIY) or “ghost guns” by extending the definition of regulated firearms to include certain unfinished frames or receivers. Additionally, the bill requires that all firearms are marked with a unique serial number and that individuals possessing such firearms maintain a certain log. Penalties are imposed for violations in the manufacture, possession, sale, and transfer of these firearms.

The Montgomery County Victim Services Advisory Board (VSAB) advises the County Council and County Executive on assisting victims and their family members who experience violent crimes including domestic violence, sexual assault and homicide. Montgomery County experienced 35 homicides in 2021, the most in one year for the past 32 years. (<https://wjla.com/news/local/montgomery-county-murder-homicide-deadliest-year-record-germantown-fatal-shooting-circle-gate-drive-seneca-valley>, Dec. 24, 2021). Montgomery County is reporting more serious domestic violence crimes than ever before. (<https://wtop.com/montgomery-county>, Oct. 13, 2021). The county’s inability to track weapons used in such violence puts victims at significantly greater risk.

Too many - almost a half dozen - ghost guns have been found in Montgomery County schools this year already. (<https://www.nbcwashington.com/news/local/dc-gun-violence/new-legislation-would-ban-ghost-guns-in-maryland/2942514>, Jan. 20, 2022). County ghost gun seizures increased fivefold in two years, from 16 in 2019 to 70 in 2021. (<https://bethesdamagazine.com/bethesda-beat/government/advocates-officials-focus-on-ghost-gun-crackdown-after-magruder-shooting/>, Jan. 26, 2022). More than 12,000 ghost gun kits were shipped to Maryland between 2016 and 2019, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) reported 117 ghost guns recovered in the state in 2019. (<https://wjla.com/news/local/ghost-guns-ban-maryland-rally-moms-students-demand-action-everytown-for-gun-safety-brian-frosh-attorney-general-tuesday-lawyers-mall-annapolis-senator-will-smith>, Jan. 24, 2022). The state regulation of these dangerous firearms is long overdue.

VSAB asks the committee to issue a favorable report on Senate Bill 387.

Sincerely,

Amos Hicks III
VSAB Member

Department of Health and Human Services