

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF BILL SB0387 - FAVORABLE  
Public Safety - Untraceable Firearms

TO: Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher,  
and members of the Judicial Proceedings  
Committee

FROM: Chris Apple  
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Maryland is experiencing a dramatic increase in the use of untraceable firearms in violent crime. These so-called “ghost” guns do not have a serial number and cannot be traced by law enforcement. Under Maryland law, they are not subject to background checks, and so can be purchased as kits on the internet by anyone.

Unfortunately, the lack of regulation means these guns can be easily obtained by children and anyone who cannot pass a background check. There have recently been several high-profile shootings involving minors with ghost guns. Last year alone, Baltimore police seized 345 ghost guns, about 15% of all guns seized in the city.<sup>1</sup>

This bill would address this issue by requiring background checks for any firearm assembled from parts. It would also require any such firearm to bear a serial number. This would bring regulations for assembled firearms in line with those for pre-built firearms. It’s not a ban; it’s only imposing the same requirements that pre-built guns have seen for decades.

Certainly most Marylanders who own these kits do not intend to commit a crime, and they will have an opportunity to serialize and keep their firearms. I do not believe many people would view this as a great burden. Americans are very supportive of universal background checks<sup>2</sup> and other violence-preventing measures, even though those measures create a minor inconvenience.<sup>3</sup> It seems likely that they would also be willing to serialize their weapons, as doing so only serves to improve public safety.

I respectfully urge a favorable report on SB 387.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.wbaltv.com/article/maryland-ghost-gun-ban-legislation/38831925#>

<sup>2</sup> <https://morningconsult.com/2021/03/10/house-gun-legislation-background-checks-polling/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/most-americans-support-stricter-gun-laws-new-poll-says>