

SB 861 MSP Gun Center AG Testimony in Support.pdf

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Position: FAV



State of Maryland
Office of the Attorney General

February 22, 2022

TO: The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr., Chair, Judicial Proceedings
Committee

FROM: Carrie J. Williams, Assistant Attorney General

RE: Attorney General's Support for SB 861

The Attorney General urges the Judicial Proceedings Committee to report favorably on SB 861. Senate Bill 861 creates a Statewide Firearms Enforcement Center within the Maryland State Police Department. The Center will track, screen, and vet all firearm crimes in Maryland. Specifically, it will create and maintain a database that tracks the number, type, and source of firearms used in crimes as well as the age of the perpetrator, jurisdiction of residence, and jurisdiction of the crime.

Information is key to prevention. We cannot effectively combat gun violence without understanding when, where, and how gun crimes occur.¹ If we know who is committing gun crimes and where the guns are coming from, we can target preventative initiatives appropriately.

The Attorney General urges a favorable report on SB 861.

cc: Members of the Committee

¹ See Basia E. Lopez, Paul A. Haskins, "The Fight Against Rampant Gun Violence: Data-Driven Scientific Research Will Light the Way," National Institute of Justice (Dec. 2, 2021) (available at <https://nij.ojp.gov/topics/articles/fight-against-rampant-gun-violence-data-driven-scientific-research-will-light-way>) (NIJ scientists conclude that information about gun violence is valuable to prevention).

SB0861 - 3.1.22 -- Public Safety - Maryland State

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Position: FAV



TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE SENATE JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS COMMITTEE
SENATE BILL 861 – MARYLAND STATE POLICE GUN CENTER - ESTABLISHMENT
Sponsor – Senator Beidle

March 1, 2022

DONALD C. FRY
PRESIDENT & CEO
GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE

Position: Support

Senate Bill 861 would establish the Maryland State Police Gun Center within the Department of State Police as a statewide firearms enforcement center for the tracking, screening, and vetting of all firearm crimes committed in the state. The Center would track the number and type of firearms used in crimes of violence, the jurisdictions where crime firearms are recovered, information regarding the individual found in possession of the crime firearm, and the sources of the crime firearms recovered, if discoverable. The Center would also assist with firearm enforcement and firearm violation reduction efforts.

In 2021, Baltimore City recorded 338 homicides, marking the 7th year in a row where the city suffered more than 300 homicides. Shootings were the cause of death in the vast majority of cases. In 2022, Baltimore City is currently on track to suffer 340 homicides. Of the 51 homicides that have taken place this year, approximately 46 of them have been the result of shootings.

The level of violence in the state, and in particular Baltimore City, is unacceptable and substantive changes are required to improve public safety and ensure economic vitality and competitiveness and increase security among Maryland citizens. Improving public safety has been identified by the Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) as a key economic growth issue that needs to be urgently addressed.

The GBC has recommended a two-pronged approach to reduce violent crime. The first prong addresses crime control through enhanced public safety programs focused on repeat violent offenders and better coordination among law enforcement agencies. The second prong - crime prevention - must be instituted simultaneously with the crime control efforts. It is critically important to address the root societal causes of crime with programs that address poverty, lack of employment, need for job training programs, and an increase in after-school programs, etc. The GBC supports these types of initiatives with the same weight afforded the crime control strategies.

The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) supports Senate Bill 861 as an important step in improving public safety in the region by providing another tool to law enforcement to deal with the scourge of violent crime. Centrally tracking firearms involved in criminal activity and making the data available for law enforcement agencies to coordinate in their efforts to reduce violent crime is a common sense solution. The GBC contends that this legislation will make a tangible difference toward improving public safety throughout the State of Maryland.

For these reasons, the Greater Baltimore Committee urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 861.

The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) is a non-partisan, independent, regional business advocacy organization comprised of hundreds of businesses -- large, medium and small -- educational institutions, nonprofit organizations and foundations located in Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, and Howard counties as well as Baltimore City. The GBC is a 67-year-old, private-sector membership organization with a rich legacy of working with government to find solutions to problems that negatively affect our competitiveness and viability.

GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE

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Uploaded by: Pamela Beidle

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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 1, 2022

SB 861

Maryland State Police Gun Center - Establishment

Good Afternoon Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher 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). 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.

MSP Position Paper SB 861.pdf

Uploaded by: Thomas Williams

Position: INFO



State of Maryland
Department of State Police
Government Affairs Section
Annapolis Office (410) 260-6100

POSITION ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION

DATE: March 1, 2022

BILL NUMBER: Senate Bill 861 **Position:** Letter of Information

BILL TITLE: Maryland State Police Gun Center - Establishment

REVIEW AND ANALYSIS:

This legislation seeks to establish the Maryland State Police Gun Center within the Department of State Police (DSP). The Center will be a statewide firearms enforcement center for the tracking, screening and vetting of all firearms crimes committed in the State. This legislation also requires each law enforcement agency in the state to report certain information to the Center involving crime firearms.

The Maryland Gun Center exists today as a unit within the DSP. Created by the DSP for the purposes of tracking, screening, and vetting firearms crimes reported to the Center by all law enforcement agencies. The Center works in partnership with law enforcement officers and state's attorneys on any request relating to firearms. The Center performs a number of background checks on the person and the firearm when the request for information is presented. They work with law enforcement officers to help determine if the person is prohibited and what, if any, charges should be placed relating to the firearm. However, reporting information or calling the Center is not mandatory.

The Center acts as a voluntary resource for all law enforcement agencies investigating crimes involving firearms or encounters with citizens where firearms are present. As of February 18, 2022, the center is staffed with 3 sworn and 4 contractual civilian employees. In 2021, the Center handled 9,902 calls for service. In 2020, they handled 11,434 and in 2019, over 10,500. Most calls for service to the Gun Center include:

1. Live arrest from officers on the street,
2. Search Warrants with multiple suspects and firearms,
3. Weapon returns for all agencies,
4. Handgun Qualification License disapprovals,
5. Firearm Registration Unit disapproval
6. MAFSS system checks for Emergency Petitions and ERPO's

The Center was established as a great resource and was designed to perform the very functions mandated in the legislation. However, the full implementation of the Center was done. The Center is not able to take on the additional cases mandated in the legislation. Any effort to expand the services provided by the Center will require additional resources the program a success, i.e. personnel and equipment. Otherwise the passage of this legislation will cause it to fail.