



STATE'S ATTORNEY  
JOHN J. McCARTHY

## State's Attorney for Montgomery County

50 Maryland Avenue  
Rockville, Maryland 20850

(240) 777-7300  
FAX (240) 777-7413  
[www.montgomerycountymd.gov/sao](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/sao)

DEPUTY STATE'S ATTORNEYS  
PETER A. FEENEY  
RYAN S. WECHSLER

February 7, 2022

The Honorable Luke Clippinger  
Chair, House Judiciary Committee  
101 House Office Building  
6 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401

### **Re: HB 425 Public Safety - Untraceable Firearms - Favorable**

Dear Chairman Clippinger:

I am writing today in support of HB 425, which seeks to address a significant public risk in our communities related to untraceable firearms which are also known as ghost guns. Due to scheduling issues, I am unable to testify in person today; however, I will be testifying on this matter in Judicial Proceedings next week. I want to thank Attorney General Brian Frosh for making this issue a top priority, and Delegate Leslie Lopez for her hard work on this critical public safety problem.

Over the last several years, untraceable firearms have been a growing problem in Maryland and around the United States. In 2019, my office prosecuted a defendant who maintained a "ghost gun" manufacturing operation in the basement of his home to sell to criminals. Three years later, the number of ghost guns seized in Montgomery County grew five-fold. Especially alarming is that we are now seeing ghost guns in our schools.

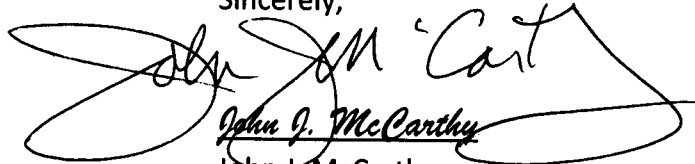
These guns are built from kits. The problem is that the parts from these kits are not serialized. The Attorney General has recently advised that thousands of these kits have been shipped to Maryland, and that readily accessible YouTube videos which provide assembly instructions have been viewed millions of times.

This bill closes a loophole by adding to the definition of firearm, "the unfinished frame or receiver of a firearm, which can readily be assembled or converted for use in a functional firearm." Moreover, the bill prohibits the purchase, receipt, sale, offer to sell or transfer of an unfinished frame or receiver unless it has been imprinted by a *serial number* by a federally

licensed manufacturer or importer. Serial numbers are a powerful tool for law enforcement in the tracing of firearms and consequently the solving of crimes.

HB 425 is an important piece of legislation that will close the loophole that currently exists between manufactured and homemade firearms. It is a critical public safety issue and I urge a favorable report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John J. McCarthy". The signature is stylized with large, sweeping loops and is positioned above the printed name.

John J. McCarthy  
State's Attorney for  
Montgomery County, MD

JM/rh