



Montgomery County

Office of Intergovernmental Relations

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HB 425

DATE: February 9, 2022

**SPONSOR: The Speaker (By Request – Office of the Attorney General) and
Delegate Lopez**

ASSIGNED TO: Judiciary

CONTACT PERSON: Sara Morningstar (Sara.Morningstar@montgomerycountymd.gov)

POSITION: SUPPORT

Public Safety – Untraceable Firearms

Gun violence in the United States is a public health issue that cannot be ignored any longer. The alarming rise in “ghost guns” or untraceable firearms confiscated by Maryland law enforcement, aligned with the reported national surge of legal gun purchases made during the pandemic, requires that 2022 be the year for Maryland to adopt legislation to ban ghost guns.

Effective June 1, 2022, HB 425 will ban the purchase, sale, and transfer of an unfinished frame or receiver if it does not have a serial number imprinted by a licensed manufacturer. Marylanders who already own these handmade firearms will have until January 1, 2023 to take them to a federally-licensed firearms dealer to have a serial number and manufacturing information engraved on the weapon. Failure to comply with the law will result in a misdemeanor punishable by up to three years in jail and a fine of up to \$10,000. The ban will not apply to guns manufactured before 1968 or to antique firearms.

The danger of these deadly weapons is that they can be easily assembled from components bought online with no required background check, have no serial numbers, and are, therefore, untraceable. These fully functional firearms are often difficult to identify as guns due to their shape or configuration and can evade metal detectors or x-ray machines creating a potential threat to public safety. Tragically, last month’s shooting at Magruder High School involved a 17-year-old using a 9 mm ghost gun purchased online to shoot and seriously harm a fellow student inside the school. And last summer at a recreation center in Germantown, a ghost gun was used by a 14-year-old to fatally shoot a 20-year-old. While it’s not fully known how many ghost guns are used in crimes, Montgomery County Department of Police reports that the number is rising. In 2021, 70 ghost guns were recovered from crime scenes in the County- up from 16 ghost guns in 2019 and 56 ghost guns in 2020.

With increasing incidents of gun violence in Maryland, Montgomery County supports stricter gun safety laws to include untraceable and undetectable firearms. We urge the Committee to adopt a favorable report on HB 425.