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## WRITTEN TESTIMONY

### House Bill 425 – Public Safety – Untraceable Firearms

### Judiciary Committee

February 9, 2022

### SUPPORT

**Background:** House Bill 425 (HB425) would change the definition of firearm to include what are commonly referred to as ghost guns and prohibit the purchase, sale, receiving, offering, or transferring of an unfinished frame or receiver unless it is required by federal law to be imprinted with a certain serial number.

**Written Comments:** Ghost guns pose a significant threat to public safety. Kits can be purchased on the internet by anyone, and then assembled at home to create an untraceable firearm. The prevalence of these deadly untraceable weapons is increasing in Maryland. In 2021, the Baltimore Police Department seized 324 ghost guns, which accounts for 14% of all guns seized by the Department. In 2020 the Department reported seizing 128, and only 30 were seized in 2019. This sharp increase comes at time when the state is seeing a dramatic increase in homicides. Just last month a 15 year-old high school in Montgomery County student was left seriously injured after being shot by a ghost gun. Maryland is not alone in this trend, the ATF reported that approximately 10,000 ghost guns were recovered across the country in 2019, which undoubtedly can be traced to a countless number of tragedies.

The true scale of the threat that ghost guns pose is ultimately impossible to measure given that they are untraceable. We will never know how many are in circulation, however by banning them we can ensure they will no longer be sold online and end up on Maryland streets or schools.

With the recent rise in violent hate crime, the proliferation of untraceable weapons is deeply concerning to the Jewish Community. The internet is already home to enough hateful rhetoric and content to motivate perpetrators of these crimes, it should not also be a place for them to purchase firearms.

The Baltimore Jewish Council and The Associated Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore are committed to creating a safe community for all faiths to live and worship. With this in mind, the Baltimore Jewish Council urges a favorable report of HB425.

*The Baltimore Jewish Council, a coalition of central Maryland Jewish organizations and congregations, advocates at all levels of government, on a variety of social welfare, economic and religious concerns, to protect and promote the interests of The Associated Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore, its agencies and the Greater Baltimore Jewish community.*