

TESTIMONY OF COMPTROLLER PETER FRANCHOT

Support – House Bill 425 – Public Safety - Untraceable Firearms

Judiciary Committee

February 9, 2022

Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Moon and members of the Committee, it is my pleasure to provide testimony in **support** of **House Bill 425 – Public Safety - Untraceable Firearms**. I would like to thank Speaker Adrienne Jones and Delegate Lesley Lopez for sponsoring this important legislation, and the Committee for providing the opportunity for my testimony to be heard.

According to the CDC, in 2020, nearly 20,000 people were murdered in the United States in crimes involving a firearm. In Maryland, we lose approximately 500 of our fellow citizens every year to gun-related violence – a toll that falls disproportionately on vulnerable communities and people of color. Despite these alarming statistics, there are still nationwide efforts in both policy, and technology development to make access to firearms easier. The only parties who stand to benefit from the philosophy that ‘more guns mean less crime’ are the firearm manufacturers who have a financial interest in the continued legality of these so-called ‘ghost guns.’ These unserialized firearms are increasingly available, and more frequently used in criminal activity. It is crucial that HB 425 is enacted into law to help keep these essentially untraceable and uncontrollable weapons off the streets.

I am proud that Maryland is not a state that holds the misguided belief that ‘more guns means less crime,’ and continually strives to make progress against violent crime. I want to commend the sponsors of this bill and Attorney General Brian Frosh for his leadership on this important issue.

For the reasons stated above, I respectfully request a **favorable report** for House Bill 425. Thank you for your time and consideration.

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