



BALTIMORE POLICE DEPARTMENT



Brandon M. Scott
Mayor

Michael S. Harrison
Police Commissioner

TO: The Honorable Members of the House Judiciary Committee

FROM: Michelle Wirzberger, Esq., Director of Government Affairs, Baltimore Police Dept.

RE: House Bill 211 Crimes – Firearms – Straw Purchase Participant Penalty

DATE: February 2, 2022

POSITION: SUPPORT

Chair Clippinger, Vice-Chair Moon, and members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore Police Department **supports** House Bill 211.

House Bill 211 makes the crime of knowingly being a participant in a straw purchase of a regulated firearm a felony instead of a misdemeanor.

A straw purchase of a gun is when one individual who is legally permitted to purchase and possess a regulated firearm knowingly purchases a gun on behalf of someone else. Most of the time, the ultimate recipient of the firearm is not permitted to legally own that firearm because they are a convicted felon or would otherwise fail the background check.

According to the Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence, straw purchases are the most common method of gun trafficking and there are more than 30,000 attempted straw purchases each year.

This legislation a common-sense approach toward making citizens safer and combatting illegal gun crime. It gives law enforcement the ability to hold those who are funneling firearms to felons, drug cartels and gang members, accountable.

Overall, the Baltimore Police Department believes that this bill would greatly reduce the number of illegal guns on the streets of Baltimore and would provide appropriate consequences for a violation of this law. Therefore, the Baltimore Police Department respectfully requests a **favorable** report on House Bill 211.