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Maryland General Assembly  
c/o Judicial Proceedings Committee  
2 East  
Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**Favorable Testimony – SB 0889 Wearing, Carrying, or Transporting a Handgun – Penalty**

Chair Smith, Jr., Vice Chair Waldstreicher, Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of Senate Bill SB 0889. My name is Jason Rodriguez, and I am the Deputy Director for People Empowered By The Struggle (PEBTS), a One Stop Shop for all struggles. I'm not here today representing my organization, but as a citizen of Baltimore City who has experienced and witnessed gun violence way too often. As a grassroots organizer whose boots are on the frontlines of Baltimore City's most troubled neighborhoods, I do not feel that this piece of legislation will lead to the mass incarceration of mostly young men and women of color. But I must add that this Bill will do very little to change the culture and tone of gun violence especially in communities like Baltimore City.

The problem of gun violence in America will not be resolved through tougher laws and longer prison sentences. Those who are carrying guns illegally are often not in the mindset to follow and/or carryout laws. Many I argue cannot even read the language of this Bill nor truly comprehend its implications on their lives. You cannot police, legislate, nor incarcerate your way out of this pandemic of gun violence. For as long as we keep having issues like failing schooling in Baltimore City without any accountability nor oversight, we will continue to see the onset of young men and women of color who will continue the cycles of gun violence.

SB 0889 sends a clear message that our representatives and other elected officials are serious about wanting to address gun violence, but there is a lot more work that must be done to truly get at the root of this issue. My organization PEBTS and I are here to help and to provide some strong holistic solutions. **I urge a favorable report and thank you for your consideration on the Bill.**