



CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

February 14, 2023

Honorable Luke Clippinger
Chair, Judiciary Committee
Maryland House of Delegates
Taylor House Office Building, Room 101
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Support for House Bill 481 – *Criminal Law – Wearing, Carrying, or Transporting a Handgun – Penalty*

Dear Chair Clippinger:

Thank you and the entire Judiciary Committee for your leadership. The thoughtful approach you take to lawmaking is a model to be commended and appreciated.

With this letter, I express my support for a measure before your Committee, House Bill 481 – *Criminal Law – Wearing, Carrying, or Transporting a Handgun – Penalty*.

Like you, I am often asked about crime in Maryland, particularly Baltimore City. My response is clear: Crime must be the top priority for all public servants - local, state, and federal. The figures, which you know, speak for themselves. Over three hundred (300) lives lost in Baltimore City for too many years in a row. Thousands of mostly Black lives, with boundless potential, snuffed out by gun violence. Compounding the violence is a “stop snitching” culture that enables the bad people who commit these crimes to act with perceived impunity.

In Congress, I am working to push forward legislation that will make all our communities safer. For example, my bill, the *Dawson Family Witness Protection Act of 2023* (H.R. 475) creates a competitive grant program for state, local, and tribal governments to support witness protection programs for cases involving homicides,

Chair Clippinger
February 14, 2023
Page Two

violent felonies, serious drug offenses, gang-related crimes, or organized crime. This bipartisan measure provides \$150 million in funding over five years to ensure adequate protections are in place to protect against the impacts of coercion or duress against witnesses – sometimes colloquially referred to as “stop snitching” culture. Senator Ben Cardin has also introduced this measure in the U.S. Senate.

I also have legislation to address the rise in mass shootings in the United States. The *Identifying Mass Shooters Act* (H.R. 563) directs the science and research arm of the U.S. Department of Justice - the National Institute of Justice - to collect, study, and analyze online content created by convicted mass shooters in an effort to better identify the potential for mass shootings before they occur if possible.

Finally, I am proud to co-lead a measure with Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman of New Jersey, the *Stop Online Ammunition Sales Act* (H.R. 584), which requires federally licensed firearms dealers to confirm the identity of individuals who arrange to purchase ammunition over the internet by verifying a photo I.D. The bill would also require ammunition vendors to report any sales of more than 1,000 rounds within five consecutive days to the U.S. Attorney General, if the person purchasing ammunition is not a licensed dealer.

Lastly, I want to commend you and the House Judiciary Committee for affording those of us who support the position of the Baltimore City State’s Attorney on House Bill 481 an opportunity to be heard. Like you and so many others, we all want safer streets and fewer criminals. Too much violence happens with too many guns that are too readily available.

Again, thank you. I am appreciative of your indulgence.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kweisi Mfume". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Kweisi Mfume
Member of Congress