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Governor

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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 810

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The Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy (GOCPP) advises the Governor on criminal justice strategies, coordinates across public safety agencies, and allocates resources statewide to support public safety.

House Bill 810 bans the use or trafficking of switches or auto-sears. Switches can convert ordinary handguns to machine guns. Maryland currently presumes possession or use of a machine gun to be for an offensive or aggressive purpose when the machine gun is not registered. Federal law classifies switches as machine guns and places strict limits on the possession of machine guns.

A recent ATF report on firearms used in the commission of crimes revealed that in the last five years, the number of illegal machine gun conversion devices (switches or auto-sears) that law enforcement agencies reported being recovered has increased by an alarming 570%.

These small devices are lethal and stoke the unconscionable violence plaguing Maryland communities. HB810 is an important step in empowering law enforcement to recover and dispose of switches and auto-sears as they would a machine gun. The bill also updates penalties to ensure those using switches or auto-sears meet the accountability they deserve.

GOCPP urges the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee to favorably report on House Bill 810.