



Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services
Office of the Secretary

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BILL: HOUSE BILL 1287

POSITION: LETTER OF INFORMATION

EXPLANATION: HB 1287 redefines “convertible pistol” as a semiautomatic pistol that can be converted into a machine gun. Additionally, convertible pistols would no longer be available for purchase, manufacturing, or transfer.

COMMENTS:

- The Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (Department) operates the Division of Correction (DOC), the Division of Pretrial Detention and Services (DPDS), and the Division of Parole and Probation (DPP).
- Current law prohibits the possession, transportation, manufacture, transfer or receipt of devices that can be used to convert a semi-automatic handgun to a machine gun. The switch/auto-sear, and rapid-fire activator are devices that allow the semi-automatic handgun to be converted to a fully automatic handgun. This prohibition was created during the 2024 Maryland General Assembly session, (HB810/CH713, 2024). Criminal Law §4-302 provides certain exceptions for law enforcement but no exceptions for correctional officers in the course of their duties.
- HB 1287 would have a significant impact on the Department. Semi-automatic handguns are the issued weapons for the Department’s Warrant Apprehension Unit. Certain Correctional Officers are also authorized to carry the semi-automatic handguns as part of their official duties.
- Under HB 1287, the acquisition of semi-automatic handguns either within or outside of the State would be prohibited. Future replacement pistols for DPSCS could not be purchased or transferred to the Department and repair facilities would be prohibited from accepting a semi-automatic pistol for repair.
- An exemption would be needed for the Department’s Correctional Officers and Warrant Apprehension Unit under criminal law §4-302 to continue to allow for the purchasing and repair of its semi-automatic pistols.

CONCLUSION: The Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services respectfully requests the Committee consider this information as it deliberates House Bill 1287.

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