



State of Maryland
Department of State Police
Government Affairs Unit
Annapolis Office (410) 260-6100

POSITION ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION

DATE: March 5, 2025

BILL NUMBER: House Bill 1287

POSITION: Letter of Information

BILL TITLE: Criminal Law – Firearm Crimes – Convertible Pistols

REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

This legislation seeks to prohibit a person from manufacturing, selling, offering for sale, purchasing, receiving, or transferring a certain convertible pistol. A "convertible pistol" is defined in the bill as any semiautomatic pistol that can be converted into a machine gun through the attachment of a switch/auto-sear.

Current law prohibits the possession, transportation, manufacture, transfer or receipt of devices that can be used to convert a semiautomatic handgun to a machine gun. The switch/auto-sear, and rapid-fire activator are devices that allow the semiautomatic 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.

House Bill 1287, disallows the sale, transfer, purchase, or receipt of any semiautomatic pistol that can be converted into a machine gun by attaching a switch/ auto-sear. All semiautomatic pistols can be converted to fully automatic using a switch/auto-sear. The bill prohibits the manufacture and transfer of semiautomatic pistols and therefore has a direct impact on law enforcement. The semiautomatic pistol is the duty weapon used by the Maryland State Police (MSP) and the majority of other law enforcement agencies in Maryland.

As written, a manufacturer in another state could still manufacture semiautomatic handguns but would be barred from transferring them into Maryland. Semiautomatic pistols could not be transported across state lines by delivery vehicles, to be handled by federal firearms licensees or distributors licensed by the federal government. Future replacement pistols for the Maryland State Police or other law enforcement agencies could not be purchased or shipped to the agency. Repair facilities would be prohibited from accepting a semiautomatic pistol for repair.

If House Bill 1287 passes, the exemptions for law enforcement contained in Criminal Law §4-302 would need to be expanded to include convertible pistols to afford the agencies the ability to replace and/or purchase proficient equipment to perform law enforcement functions.

For these reasons, the Maryland Department of State Police respectfully requests the Committee consider this information when deliberating on House Bill 1287.