

SB334 looks to prohibit the sale of certain semi-automatic pistols that, by virtue of their design and operating mechanisms, are “readily converted by hand to or by using common household tools into a machine gun by the installation of [an inexpensive and readily available] pistol converter.” SB334 refers to these semi-automatic pistols as “machine gun convertible pistols.”

The legislation provides that on or after January 1, 2027, subject to several exemptions allowing the continued use and sale of machine gun convertible pistols, principally by or to law enforcement personnel, no person may manufacture, sell, offer for sale, purchase, receive or transfer a machine gun convertible pistol. There is no mandated surrender or relinquishment of currently owned machine gun convertible pistols.

The bill also defines the term “pistol converter” as a device when “installed or attached to the rear of the slide of a semi-automatic pistol . . . interferes with the trigger mechanism, which enables the pistol to shoot automatically more than one shot by single function of the trigger.” SB334 adds pistol converters to current law’s definition of “rapid fire activators” that include bump stocks and switch/auto-sears. As the Committee may recall, switch/auto-sears are banned in Maryland as a result of legislation adopted during the 2024 Legislative session.

SB334 is a logical and prudent step in prohibiting the sale of firearms that are readily convertible to operate as rapid fire machine guns. Though the manufacturers of these handguns may not have foreseen or intended the misuse of their products, the relative ease with which these semi-automatic pistols can now be modified to operate as machine guns supports, if not compels, the adoption of the prohibition against the continued sale or transfer of “machine gun convertible pistols.”

It is noteworthy that the Supreme Court’s decision invalidating BATF’s ban on bump stocks, *Garland v. Cargill* (2024), turned on its statutory analysis that the National Firearms Act did not authorize BATF to regulate bump stocks as machine guns. Recall BATF’s bump stock rule was adopted in response to the 2017 tragic mass shooting at the Mandalay Bay Hotel in Las Vegas. Bump stocks remain prohibited under Maryland law. SB334 provides the statutory basis for banning semi-automatic pistols that can be easily transformed into continuous, rapid fire machine guns and thereby mitigate the dangers posed by such machine gun convertible pistols.

Accordingly, I urge the Committee to vote in favor of SB334 and work for its enactment into law.

Respectfully submitted,

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