

TO: Chair Bartlett, **Vice Chair** Davis, Members of the Judiciary Committee

FROM: Cass Crifasi, PhD, MPH

Associate Professor and Co-Director, Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions

DATE: February 23, 2026

RE: HB 1339-Handgun Roster Reform

My name is Dr. Cassandra Crifasi. I am an Associate Professor of Health Policy and Management at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, the Co-Director of the Center for Gun Violence Solutions and a member of the Maryland Handgun Roster Board. This testimony represents my opinion and does not necessarily reflect that of Johns Hopkins University. I am a longtime firearm owner who has hunted and still actively participates in recreational sports shooting. I am also one of the nation's leading experts on firearm policy and violence prevention. I am sorry I cannot be there in person today but will be available to answer questions following the bill hearing.

Maryland's Handgun Roster Board was established in 1988 to serve as a gatekeeper for safety, ensuring firearms sold or transferred within the state meet certain requirements. The Board helped to keep cheap, poorly made handguns off the street. However, since the Board's inception, firearms and accessories have undergone significant advancements, making it imperative that the Board modernize to keep pace.

My primary concern is the Board adding to the roster short-barreled rifles and shotguns, and weapons that, when altered with a conversion kit, function similarly to assault weapons. Maryland prohibits the transport, possession, sale, offer for sale, transfer, purchase, or receipt of assault weapons to reduce the frequency and lethality of mass shooting incidents. Allowing short-barreled rifles and shotguns and weapons that function similarly to banned assault weapons to pass through the Board as 'handguns' creates opportunities for especially lethal firearms with large capacity magazines (LCMs) to be available to civilians.^{i ii iii iv v} The Board is provided minimal guidance in evaluating handguns that can, with the addition of accessories, be transformed into banned firearms.^{vi} This is further complicated by multiple, and often conflicting, definitions of a handgun.^{vii viii}

Maryland's Handgun Roster Board was established to serve as an arbiter of safety standards, but it has fallen short of fulfilling its intended role. It is time to update the process to clearly

distinguish between handguns and short-barreled rifles or shotguns to protect our communities. I support the favorable passage of HB 1339.

ⁱ Koper CS. (2020). "Assessing the Potential to Reduce Deaths and Injuries from Mass Shootings Through Restrictions on Assault Weapons and Other High-Capacity Semiautomatic Firearms." *Criminology & Public Policy*. doi:10.1111/1745-9133.12485

ⁱⁱ de Jager E, McCarty JC, Jarman MP, Goralnick E. (2019). "US Civilian Active Shooter Incidents Involving a Semiautomatic Rifle Are More Lethal Than Incidents Involving Other Firearms." *Journal of the American College of Surgeons*. doi: 10.1016/j.jamcollsurg.2019.03.017

ⁱⁱⁱ Klarevas L. (2016). "Rampage Nation: Securing America From Mass Shootings." https://onsearch.library.uwa.edu.au/permalink/61UWA_INST/1iju3hj/alma991316035902101

^{iv} Klarevas L, Conner A, Hemenway D. (2019). "The Effect of Large-Capacity Magazine Bans on High-Fatality Mass Shootings, 1990–2017." *Am J Public Health*. doi: 10.2105/AJPH.2019.305311

^v Webster DW. (2021). "Policies That Reduce Gun Violence: Restricting Large Capacity Magazines." Bloomberg School of Public Health. <https://publichealth.jhu.edu/2021/policies-that-reduce-gun-violence-restricting-large-capacity-magazines>

^{vi} Md. Code Ann., Crim. Law §§ 4-301; 4-303

^{vii} Md. Code Ann., Pub. Safety, § 5-401(c).

^{viii} Md. Code, Criminal Law, § 4-201(c).