



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

SB 334 – Criminal Law – Firearm Crimes – Machine Gun Convertible Pistols

Under federal law, it has been illegal to manufacture or import new machine guns for civilian sales since 1986. It is also illegal in Maryland. However, law enforcement is increasingly finding machine guns on our streets, due to pistols that can be easily converted into fully automatic weapons using a small device, also known as a ‘switch.’

SB 334 addresses this problem of DIY – Do It Yourself – Machine Guns through common sense design regulations.

What are DIY machine guns? They are pistols that can be easily converted into fully automatic weapons using a tiny, Lego-sized pistol converter or “switch”. Switches are illegal under both federal and Maryland law. However, due to the growth of 3-D printing and traffickers who smuggle and sell them, these small devices are cheap and easy to get. ATF data shows that recoveries of machine gun conversion devices increased by 784% from 2019 to 2023 alone. Maryland data shows us that these DIY machine guns have been recovered or used in crimes across Maryland at an increasing rate.

The majority of gun manufacturers use designs that are not easily convertible to machine guns. But several do. And while those manufacturers should be taking steps to make sure their guns can’t be easily converted into DIY machine guns, they have not. That is why we need SB 334 to strengthen product safety standards for all handguns sold in Maryland, ensuring that no handgun sold to civilians can be easily converted into a DIY machine gun.

SB 334 adds machine gun convertible pistol to our current law addressing assault weapons.

SB 334 does not:

- require current owners to modify or get rid of convertible pistols they already own.
- prohibit future sales to law enforcement officers or agencies or to members of the military acting within the scope of their official business
- treat dealers unfairly. The bill has a delayed effective date so that existing inventory can still be sold.
- target responsible gun owners. It targets industry designs that make machine gun conversion possible in the first place.

Maryland can and should protect its citizens and its law enforcement from these DIY machine guns through this common sense design regulation. I respectfully request a favorable report on SB 334.