



OFFICE OF THE STATE'S ATTORNEY FOR BALTIMORE CITY

February 25, 2026

The Honorable Sandy J. Bartlett
Chair, House Judiciary Committee
101 Taylor House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Support of HB1339 – Handgun Roster Reform

Dear Chairwoman Bartlett, Vice Chairwoman Davis and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my support for HB1339 – Handgun Roster Reform – which I believe to be long overdue, common sense legislation that adds a level of checks and balances to the Handgun Roster Board process.

As one of the newest members of the Handgun Roster Board, I was perplexed as to why certain firearms came before us with the label of a “handgun”. I questioned the logic and legitimacy of certain firearms having been deemed as such, and continued to explore ways of addressing this very issue. This legislation helps address that and much more. HB1339 brings an added level of review, both legally and logistically, and will help weed out those firearms that may not fit the legal definition of being a handgun before ever reaching the board for review.

And while some may argue that this bill only adds another layer of bureaucracy to the current process, I would counter that given that gun violence is one of the largest public safety threats to our nation, an extra layer of checks and balances added to this process can only help ensure a greater level of responsibility to gun owners and manufactures in this state.

HB1339, and its counterpart SB830, would simply require legal review by the state's Attorney General's Office to ensure its compliance under state and federal law, and require testing of the handgun to ensure it is safe and functional. Those things are a small price to pay for a process with such a large, long-term social impact. I wholeheartedly believe in the constitutional rights of citizens to legally and responsibly own firearms, and believe this legislation simply adds to those protections by implementing a fair and balanced approach to the legal standard of a handgun.

As the elected State's Attorney for the City of Baltimore, I believe it is incumbent on me to make my voice heard on issues of such importance, and as a member of the Handgun



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Roster Board, this bill provides answers to questions I have raised since becoming a member. I hope you will strongly consider passing HB1339, and I thank you for giving me this opportunity to share my testimony.

Sincerely,

Ivan J. Bates

Ivan J. Bates
State's Attorney for Baltimore City