

Chair Bartlett and Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of this legislation. My name is Greg Lickenbrock, and I am Everytown for Gun Safety's Senior Firearms Analyst. Before joining Everytown, I was a gun magazine editor for 10 years. I tested hundreds of firearms, attended media events and training courses, and worked with dozens of gun makers, including Glock.

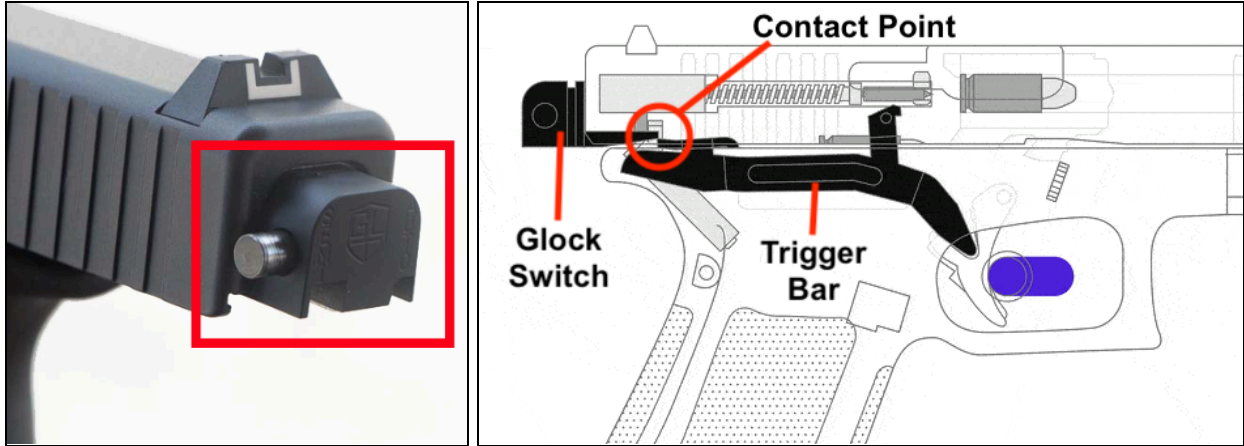
House Bill 577 is a smart approach to dealing with the surge in semi-automatic pistols converted into fully automatic machine guns using devices known as "Glock switches" — weapons that have been used in at least 20 mass shootings and have been recovered in connection with criminal activity all over Maryland.

Machine guns and the devices used to create them are already illegal under federal and state law. But switches are difficult for police to intercept; they're small and easy to 3D print. Instead, House Bill 577 targets the pistols that are so uniquely easy to convert with switches.

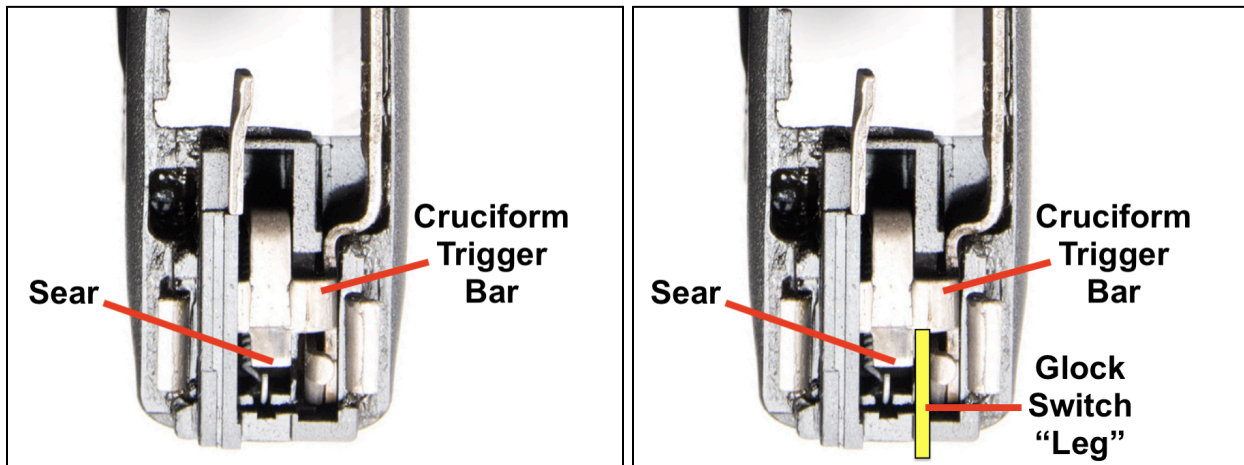
Yes, other semi-automatic firearms can be converted into machine guns — through extensive engineering outside of the average person's capabilities. Only Glock pistols, and those made by other manufacturers who have copied Glock, can be converted using a switch. In fact, it takes less than a minute to install one. That is because Glock-style pistols use cross-shaped (or "cruciform") trigger bars that provide surface area for a switch to contact. Each time the gun's slide returns forward, the switch impacts the trigger bar, causing the gun to fire. As long as the shooter depresses the trigger and the gun has ammunition, it will continue firing.

Most other pistols — including those made by Beretta, CZ, Smith & Wesson, Sig Sauer, Springfield, and many, many others — are simply incompatible with switches. They do not use Glock's once-patented cruciform trigger bar design, and their trigger mechanisms are broken into smaller, disparate components shielded from interference.

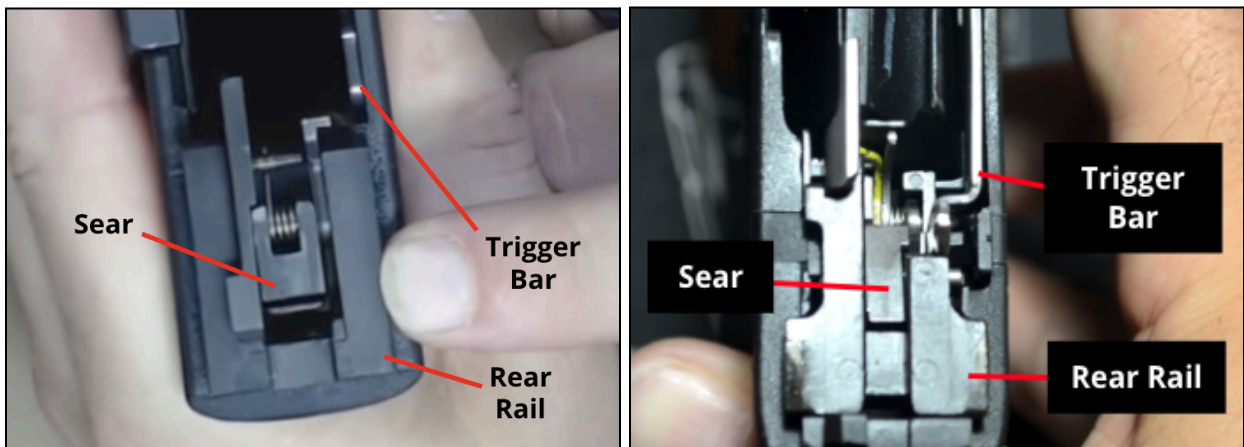
In other words, this bill gets at the root of the problem without impacting the vast majority of the pistol market today. It also would not affect the guns that people already own, or sales to law enforcement. It is an effort to get a few gun makers to change their designs and fix this problem. Thank you.



A Glock switch attaches to the rear of a Glock slide (left) and contacts the trigger bar (right).



These top-down views show a Glock's cross-shaped (or "cruciform") trigger bar and where a Glock switch (shown in yellow) pushes the trigger bar downward, causing the gun to fire.



Adding a switch to Springfield XD (left) or Smith & Wesson M&P (right) pistols would require extensive modifications and engineering.