

**Institute for Legislative Action**

11250 WAPLES MILL ROAD

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**NRA**

February 3, 2026

National Rifle Association

11250 Waples Mill Road

Fairfax, VA 22030

October 24, 2025

Chair Smith and Members of the Committee,

My name is John Weber and I represent the National Rifle Association and our members in Maryland. The NRA is opposed to House Bill 577. This legislation imposes new prohibitions on so called "machine gun convertible pistols," expanding the state's existing firearm restrictions without addressing actual criminal misuse, while creating vague definitions, enforcement challenges, and undue burdens on law-abiding gun owners, dealers, and manufacturers. It offers no demonstrable public safety benefit and risks criminalizing common, lawfully possessed firearms.

First, Maryland already prohibits machine guns and rapid fire devices. Under current law, including federal statutes enforced in the state, fully automatic firearms and conversion devices like auto-sears are heavily regulated and illegal for civilian possession without special licensing. HB 577 does not target illegal conversions or the criminals who use them; instead, it broadly bans an entire class of semiautomatic pistols based on design features that may or may not facilitate easy modification. The bill's definitions—focusing on "cruciform trigger bars" and "polymer notches"—are overly broad and could inadvertently capture popular, unmodified handguns that have never been converted, punishing owners for hypothetical risks rather than proven dangers.

Second, the bill disproportionately impacts law-abiding citizens rather than criminals. Genuine offenders who traffic in illegal switches or modified firearms already ignore existing laws and will continue to do so, sourcing parts from black markets or 3D printers. Meanwhile, SB 334 forces manufacturers, dealers, and owners to navigate new compliance hurdles, including potential lists of prohibited models from the Department of State Police. A person who lawfully purchased a pistol before the ban could face criminal penalties for simple possession or transfer after January 1, 2027, even if they've never modified it. This creates a chilling effect on Second Amendment rights, deterring responsible ownership without deterring crime.

Third, HB 577 adds unnecessary complexity to exemptions and enforcement. While it includes carve-outs for law enforcement, inheritance, and servicing, these are riddled with ambiguities that invite litigation and errors. For instance, temporary transfers to gunsmiths or surrenders to authorities are allowed, but the bill expands the "rapid fire activator" definition to explicitly include "pistol converters," potentially exposing licensed dealers to new liabilities during routine

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repairs or sales. Law enforcement agencies, already stretched thin, will bear the added burden of interpreting and enforcing these rules, diverting resources from real threats like violent crime.

Fourth, there is no clear evidence that banning these pistols will enhance public safety. Criminals rarely use legally obtained, convertible pistols in crimes; most illegal full-auto conversions involve smuggled or homemade parts. By focusing on firearm design rather than criminal behavior, HB 577 follows a pattern of ineffective gun control that fails to reduce violence, as seen in other states with similar bans. It also raises constitutional concerns, as courts have increasingly scrutinized laws that ban common arms without narrow tailoring to prevent misuse.

Finally, this legislation magnifies the risk of overreach in a state that already has some of the nation's toughest gun laws, including assault weapon bans and magazine limits. Adding yet another layer of prohibitions erodes the rights of Maryland's law-abiding gun owners without meaningfully impacting those who break the law.

In closing, Maryland already has robust tools to combat illegal machine guns through existing criminal prohibitions and federal partnerships. HB 577 does not meaningfully improve those tools. For these reasons, the NRA respectfully urges the committee to oppose HB 577.

Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Weber". The signature is fluid and cursive.

John Weber  
State Director  
NRA-ILA