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To: The Honorable Maggie McIntosh
Chair, Appropriations Committee

From: The Office of the Attorney General

Re: House Bill 1078 – Public Safety – Education – Firearm Funding (No Funding for
Firarms Act) - **SUPPORT**

The Office of Attorney General urges the Committee to favorably report House Bill 1078. If enacted, this legislation would prohibit a county board or public school from spending any money from any source, directly or indirectly, to provide a teacher with a firearm or to train a teacher in the use of firearms. The bill includes a carefully crafted exception for a school-approved sport club that makes use of firearms.

Maryland has made great strides to protect our families and communities from the devastating effects of gun violence. In 2013, after careful consideration, the Maryland General Assembly enacted the Firearm Safety Act – a common sense law that includes reasonable limits on weapon and bullet types and magazine capacity, as well as a thorough licensing system for handguns. Individually, these measures have been shown to greatly reduce gun-related deaths. Together, they create a system of protection that has been deemed constitutional by the courts and which enjoys broad popular support. The Act has also been widely recognized as a national model for public safety.

Despite these best efforts, communities in Maryland continue to suffer the effects of shootings and gun violence. We must continue to build safer neighborhoods and to prevent



the causes, and reduce the effects of such violence. However, arming teachers is not the answer to these problems.

An overwhelming number of teachers disagree with carrying a gun in school,¹ even those who own guns.² The American Federation of Teachers (AFT) believes that arming teachers would not only make our children's classrooms less safe, but also is not what educators and students want.³ This is why the Office of the Attorney General vigorously supports House Bill 1078, because it defunds any effort to spend local, state, federal, or private revenue, directly or indirectly, on arming teachers. We know more guns will not make kids safer – rather, gun safety laws and background checks, like the Firearm Safety Act of 2013, keep guns out of the hands of dangerous people.⁴ Arming teachers is not, nor should it be the answer to stopping gun violence.

For these reasons, the Office of the Attorney General urges a favorable report on HB 1078.

cc: Members of the House Appropriations Committee

¹ National Education Association, *New NEA national survey: educators overwhelmingly reject proposals to arm teachers* (March 13, 2018), <http://www.nea.org/home/72972.htm>.

² *Id.*

³ Robin Lloyd, *Arming Teachers is a Terrible Idea*, Giffords (Aug. 23, 2018), https://giffords.org/blog/2018/08/arming_teachers/

⁴ *Id.*