



**SB 958-Support  
Ghost Guns  
Elizabeth Banach, Executive Director  
Marylanders to Prevent Gun Violence  
Judicial Proceeding Committee**

March 3, 2020

Dear Chairman Smith, Vice-Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Committee,

Marylanders to Prevent Gun Violence is a local, grassroots organization dedicated to reducing gun deaths and injuries throughout the state of Maryland, with a particular focus on reducing urban gun violence and gun suicide. **We urge the committee to vote FAVORABLY on Senate Bill 958 to prohibit untraceable and undetectable firearms.**

This piece of legislation seeks to address firearms that are untraceable by law-enforcement. These self-assembled firearms—which can be built from kits or 3D printed—are referred to as ghost guns because they do not come with a serial number and are untraceable. In the traditional manufacturing process, the firearm manufacturer or importer will affix a serial number and markings that identify the manufacturer or importer, make, model, and caliber. Using this information, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) can track firearms from the manufacturer or importer through the distribution chain to the first retail purchaser. ATF works extensively with other law enforcement agencies to trace firearms using this technique.

Tracing is a powerful investigative tool, but it is dependent on the ability to identify firearms based on their serial numbers. Because the purveyors of the parts and kits used to make untraceable guns claim that they are not selling firearms, they also assert that these serialization requirements do not apply to them. Without a serial number, law enforcement cannot run a trace search on a firearm, making it difficult, if not impossible, to determine the chain of custody from the gun itself.

Furthermore, these guns may be produced largely or even entirely from plastic, which can render them undetectable by traditional security scanning systems. Ghost gun purveyors thus provide access to untraceable, undetectable firearms to individuals who have not passed—and potentially could not pass—a background check.

Law enforcement in certain parts of the country are already seeing an alarming increase in the number of ghost guns being recovered in investigations. According to the ATF, California is seeing 30% of recovered guns as un-serialized weapons. MPGV urges action

on this before we see these numbers reflected everywhere. We ask for a FAVORABLE report on SB 958.