



**HB 1257-Support
Firearm Dealers' Safety Act
Elizabeth Banach, Executive Director
Marylanders to Prevent Gun Violence
House Judicial Proceedings Committee
February 26, 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 House Bill 1257 to ensure that licensed firearm dealers implement effective practices and security measures to guard against gun theft .**

While the majority of gun dealers in this country are responsible business owners, a small minority have been connected to the diversion of firearms to the black market. Roughly five percent of gun dealers are responsible for about 90% of recovered crime guns nationwide. Despite Maryland's reputation as one with strong gun laws, there are still indicators that a large portion of Maryland's crime guns originate within the state.

Maryland is not immune to this danger posed by improper gun dealer practices. In a 2017 report, ATF traced 5,884 crime guns used within Maryland. Forty seven percent (2,775) of those originated in Maryland. Our neighboring state New Jersey has enacted comprehensive security measures for firearm dealers and had only 10 recorded firearms stolen from licensed gun dealers between 2012 and 2016. During that time period, 341 firearms were stolen from licensed firearm dealers in Maryland. In fact, nationally burglaries of licensed gun dealers increased by 48 percent between 2012 and 2016, while robberies increased by 175 percent. Baltimore County saw seven firearm stores burglarized ten times over the last two years. These alone accounted for 50 of the 212

stolen firearms for that period. Criminals have also recently targeted establishments in Howard and Montgomery counties on successive nights, stealing 45 weapons.

This bill creates mandatory business practices to ensure consistently responsible sales and prevent diversion to the criminal market. This law would level the playing field, demanding that all Federally Licensed Firearm Dealers in Maryland maintain the high safety standards already practiced by responsible businesses. MPGK urges that this committee vote **FAVORABLY** on HB 1257 to ensure that licensed firearm dealers implement effective practices and security measures to guard against gun theft.