



**Testimony in Support of
HB 1501
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Marylanders to Prevent Gun Violence**

March 4, 2020

Dear Chairman Clippenger, Vice-Chair Atterbeary, 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 HB 1501 to strengthen Maryland's Reporting Loss or Theft of Firearms requirement.**

Gun theft is a growing problem in America. A substantial number of these thefts are never reported to law enforcement agencies.

- From 2006 to 2016, the number of guns reported stolen from individuals increased by approximately 60%.ⁱ Many cities have reported alarming spikes in the number of firearms stolen from cars.ⁱⁱ
- Nationally-representative survey data indicates that approximately 380,000 guns are stolen from individual gun owners each year.ⁱⁱⁱ
- Less than 240,000 gun thefts are reported to police each year^{iv}—suggesting that nearly 40% of the guns lost or stolen in the United States are never reported to law enforcement.^v

Stolen guns are a leading source of crime guns. Stolen guns that enter the illegal market are an appealing source of firearms for people who are legally prohibited from having guns.^{vi} Accordingly, **recent data shows a link between stolen guns and crime.**

- An analysis of more than 23,000 stolen firearms recovered by police between 2010 and 2016 found that the majority of these weapons were recovered in connection with crimes, including more than 1,500 violent acts such as murder, kidnapping, and armed robbery.^{vii}

Altering the timeline to report a lost or stolen firearm, would bring Maryland law in line with the federal mandate that Federal Firearm Licensees have to report to ATF and local law enforcement. This would allow consistent messaging regardless of the firearm owner. Clearer messaging helps gunowners understand the expectations and requirements to being a law-abiding gun owner. Furthermore, the sooner a missing gun is reported, the more likely that the trail to that weapon is still traceable by law enforcement and that recovery is possible before the gun is used in the commission of a crime.

MPGV requests a favorable reporting for HB 1501.

ⁱ Brian Freskos, "Missing Pieces: Gun Theft from Legal Gun Owners is on the Rise, Quietly Fueling Violent Crime," *The Trace*, November 20, 2017, <https://bit.ly/2izST1h>.

ⁱⁱ Martin Kaste, "More Guns In Cars Mean More Guns Stolen From Cars," NPR, May 9, 2019, <https://n.pr/2MdG66e>.

iii David Hemenway, Deborah Azrael, and Matthew Miller, "Whose Guns are Stolen? The Epidemiology of Gun Theft Victims," *Injury Epidemiology* 4, no. 1 (2017).

iv Freskos

v Hemenway

vi Philip J. Cook and Harold A. Pollack, "Reducing Access to Guns by Violent Offenders," *RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences* 3, no. 5 (2017): 2-36.

vii Freskos