



# POSITION STATEMENT

## TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

### HOUSE BILL 1629 -- OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL - FIREARM CRIME - STUDY

March 3, 2020

**DONALD C. FRY  
PRESIDENT & CEO  
GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE**

#### **Position: Support**

House Bill 1629 requires the Maryland Attorney General to study information regarding gun crimes committed since August 1, 2015, including the number and types of firearm crimes, the jurisdictions where the firearm crimes occurred, and 9-1-1 requests for emergency assistance involving gun crimes. The bill further requires that the study identify whether any arrests were made, whether charges were filed and the disposition of those cases. Reports are required on or before December 1, 2020 with regard to firearm crimes committed from August 1, 2015 through July 31, 2019, and another report to be submitted on or before December 1, 2022 with regard to firearm crimes committed from August 1, 2019 through July 31, 2021.

Firearms are used in most of the violent crime that takes place. In Baltimore City, 309 of the 348 homicides in calendar year 2019 involved a shooting. While some crime data is available, there is a lack of easily-available information to study violent crime data and trends or judicial actions. The GBC is supportive of this bill's specific call for studying firearm crimes to identify whether any arrests were made, whether charges were filed, and the disposition of those cases. This information is currently difficult to determine, which deprives law enforcement officials and policymakers of important data to consider when seeking solutions to deter violent gun crime.

The GBC's *2020 Legislative Priorities* states, "violent crime and public safety concerns threaten the health, well-being, and economic prosperity of our communities. Persistent violent crime rates in Baltimore City require strategic action by state and city officials." The *2020 Legislative Priorities* also identify a need to "improve public accessibility of judicial data . . ." House Bill 1629 is consistent with these priorities by collecting and analyzing gun crime data that could aid in creating policies that deter crime.

**For these reasons, the Greater Baltimore Committee urges a favorable report on House Bill 1629.**

*The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) is a non-partisan, independent, regional business advocacy organization comprised of hundreds of businesses -- large, medium and small -- educational institutions, nonprofit organizations and foundations located in Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, and Howard counties as well as Baltimore City. The GBC is a 64-year-old, private-sector membership organization with a rich legacy of working with government to find solutions to problems that negatively affect our competitiveness and viability.*

**GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE**

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