



Montgomery County

Office of Intergovernmental Relations

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HB 638

DATE: February 25, 2021

SPONSOR: Delegate Lopez

ASSIGNED TO: Judiciary

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POSITION: SUPPORT

Public Safety- Untraceable and Undetectable Firearms

House Bill 638 adds unfinished frames or receivers to the list of regulated firearms in Maryland, requires unfinished frames or receivers to be permanently marked or serialized with identifying information, criminalizes removing such information from the firearm, and limits the transfer of the unfinished frame or receiver. It also provides for suspension or revocation of a firearms dealer's license for convictions related to illegal transfer of unfinished frames or receivers. Additionally, it criminalizes the manufacture, possession, and transfer of covert or undetectable firearms.

Homemade or improvised guns without commercial serial numbers have been dubbed "ghost guns" to describe a type of firearm that is outside the scope of federal and state gun safety laws. House Bill 638 addresses the issue of untraceable firearms that cannot be easily identified as firearms due to their shape or configuration, or that can evade metal detectors or x-ray machines creating a potential threat to public safety. In Montgomery County, during recent incidents serving arrest warrants and other public interactions, County police officers have seized privately manufactured firearms not marked with serial numbers or identifying information. Available online with no required background check or other limitation, ghost gun kits can be easily purchased, its component parts assembled with just a few tools, and a deadly weapon created all beyond the reach of Maryland's current gun safety laws.

Montgomery County supports stricter gun safety laws to include untraceable and undetectable firearms which are contributing to gun violence in our State. We would urge the Committee adopt a favorable report on HB 638.