



BALTIMORE POLICE DEPARTMENT



Brandon M. Scott
Mayor

Michael S. Harrison
Police Commissioner

TO: The Honorable Members of the House Judiciary Committee

FROM: Michelle Wirzberger, Esq., Director of Government Affairs, Baltimore Police Dept.

RE: House Bill 1291 Public Safety – Untraceable Firearms

DATE: March 1, 2021

POSITION: SUPPORT

Chair Clippinger, Vice-Chair Atterbearly, and members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore Police Department **supports** House Bill 1291.

House Bill 1291 seeks to prohibit a person from manufacturing, assembling, possessing, selling, offering to sell, transferring, purchasing, or receiving a certain firearm or unfinished frame or receiver not marked by a federally licensed firearms manufacturer or federally licensed firearms importer; prohibits a person from possessing, selling, offering to sell, transferring, purchasing, or receiving an object that is marketed or advertised to be designed for the purpose of being manufactured or assembled into an unfinished frame or receiver.

An example of an item covered by this bill, is a “Polymer 80” which is essentially a gun that is only 80% constructed. These firearms are assembled by a person using acquired parts or a kit that includes one portion of the gun that is unfinished. This requires the purchaser to perform their own drilling or tooling of the gun in order to make it fully functional. One of the most popular ways to make a polymer 80 is by buying pre-made parts and purchasing an 80% lower receiver.

In this scenario, a background check would not be completed because they are only conducted on completed lower receivers. People who cannot legally purchase guns because of being convicted of a disqualifying crime, not being of age, being found mentally incompetent, etc., can currently order a polymer 80 over the internet and have it shipped to their residence.

A couple of 2020 statistics to note:

- ✓ In 2020, BPD recovered 126 Polymer 80s whereas in 2019, we recovered only 29.
- ✓ The majority of those retrieved in 2020 were recovered as a result of traffic stops, which shows that criminals were transporting them and keeping them close for use.

- ✓ The Southwestern District in the City accounted for the largest amount of Polymer 80 seizures in 2020 with 26 overall. This district led in the number of violent acts such as homicide and shootings, in 2020.
- ✓ In 2020 there was a total of 21 NIBIN leads associated with Polymer 80's which indicates that 17% of the Polymer 80's recovered were used in at least one act of violence.
- ✓ 15 Polymer 80's were recovered that were directly linked to a shooting or a homicide investigation.
- ✓ Most important of all, in 2020, 29 of the 126 (23%) Polymer 80's recovered were seized from individuals under the age of 21. These guns were used by those who were not even of legal age to carry a gun.
- ✓ The youngest person who was caught with a Polymer 80 was 14 years old.

Overall, the Baltimore Police Department believes that this bill would greatly reduce the number of illegal guns on the street and thereby assist in the prevention of crimes. Therefore, the Baltimore Police Department respectfully requests a **favorable** report on House Bill 1291.