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**SB0488**

March 27, 2024

**TO:** Members of the House Judiciary Committee  
**FROM:** Nina Themelis, Director of Mayor's Office of Government Relations  
**RE:** Senate Bill 488 – Civil Actions – Public Nuisances – Firearm Industry Members  
**Gun Industry Accountability Act of 2024**

**POSITION: SUPPORT**

Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Bartlett, and members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** Senate Bill (SB) 488 with amendment.

Since its enactment in 2005, the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act (PLCAA) has shielded the firearms industry from civil liability for negligence, defective products, and irresponsible business practices. Under PLCAA the firearms industry may not be held accountable in court even if it is proven that a gun manufacturer or dealer acted negligently or irresponsibly. Allowing firearms businesses to operate without accountability has incentivized profit-making at the expense of responsible business practices. PLCAA's special protections have directly contributed to the gun violence epidemic in Baltimore City, where nine out of ten homicides are caused by a gun.

SB 488 will operate as an exception to PLCAA and ensure that the gun industry will be held to the same standard as any other business. If it is proven that a gun industry member's business practices are unlawful or negligent, it will be held accountable under the law. As the City recently demonstrated in its lawsuit against the "ghost gun" manufacture Polymer-80, successful lawsuits against gun industry members can result in settlements and verdicts that protect the public and keep firearms out of the hands of criminals.

Given the importance of providing local jurisdictions the proper tools to combat gun violence within their borders, the BCA supports an amendment to SB 488 specifying that local jurisdictions may bring an action against a firearm industry member under the law. It is vitally important that local jurisdictions, which deal daily with the terrible effects of gun violence, can use SB 488 to seek redress and reform from the gun industry.

The value of such an amendment is illustrated by Chicago's recent lawsuit against Glock Inc. ("Glock") related to the conversion of Glock handguns into automatic weapons. Chicago's lawsuit was brought under the recently passed Illinois Firearm Industry Responsibility Act, which like SB 488 provides an exception to PLCAA. Recent news articles have reported that these simple and dangerous Glock conversions are becoming increasingly common in Baltimore City. An amendment to SB 488 specifying that local governments can enforce the law would allow the City to bring similar lawsuits to protect Baltimore citizens from irresponsible and unlawful gun industry practices.

For the above reasons, the BCA respectfully requests a **favorable with amendment** report on SB 488.