



# BALTIMORE POLICE DEPARTMENT

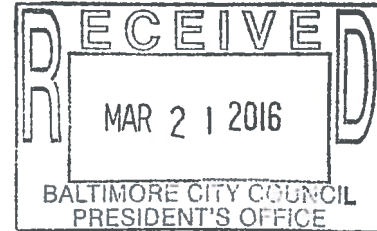


Stephanie Rawlings-Blake  
Mayor

Kevin Davis  
Police Commissioner

March 22, 2016

Honorable President and Members of the Baltimore City Council  
Room 400, City Hall  
100 N. Holliday Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21202



*Attention: Natawna Austin, Executive Secretary*

**Re: City Council Bill No. 15-0582  
Dangerous Knives – Transfer, etc., to or Permitting Possession, etc., by  
Individual Under 21**

Dear Council President Young and Members of the City Council:

The Baltimore Police Department (BPD or the Department) has reviewed Council Bill 15-0582. This bill prohibits the sale, giving away, or other transfer of “dangerous knives” to individuals under the age of 21 and prohibits a person from permitting the use or possession of these dangerous knives by individuals under the age of 21. The bill creates a definition of “dangerous knives” to which this new will apply. The bill creates a misdemeanor crime for a violation of the provisions of this bill with a prison term of not more than 12 months and a fine not more than \$1,000. Additionally, the bill increases the penalty for possession or sale of switchblade knives to \$1,000 from \$500. The Department is not opposed to this legislation.

The Department understands that the intent of the bill sponsors is to restrict the availability of dangerous knives to people under the age of 21 in order to prevent knife-related crime. Under State law, a person may not wear or carry a dangerous weapon of any kind concealed on or about the person, including knives. Additionally, a person may not wear or carry a dangerous weapon openly with the intent or purpose of injuring an individual in an unlawful manner.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, the City Council has banned the possession or sale of switchblade knives. Under the current law, switchblade knives are defined as any knife with an automatic spring or other device for opening and/or closing the blade.<sup>2</sup>

While the vast majority of homicides in Baltimore City are due to gunshot wounds, the City does experience a number of knife-related homicides each year. Knives are also commonly used in aggravated assaults and in connection with crimes such as robberies. There are any number of ways that an individual can come into possession of a dangerous knife. However, this bill may restrict some sales and transfers of these dangerous knives in Baltimore City, specifically to those under the age of 21. This bill may serve as an additional tool to law enforcement as it attempts to keep dangerous weapons out of the hands of criminals.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. The Department looks forward to working with the City Council on this matter.

*Favorable w/ comm*

<sup>1</sup> Maryland Criminal Law Article § 4-101

<sup>2</sup> Baltimore City Police Ordinances § 59-22.

Sincerely,



Andrew G. Vetter  
Director of Government Affairs