

CITY OF BALTIMORE

SHEILA DIXON, Mayor



MAYOR'S OFFICE OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE

334 City Hall
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

TO: The Honorable Stephanie Rawlings Blake
and Members of the Baltimore City Council
Room 400 City Hall,
100. N. Holiday Street
Attn: Karen Randle

FROM: Sheryl Goldstein, Director, Mayor's Office on Criminal Justice

DATE: June 10, 2008

RE: City Council Bill No. 08-0046

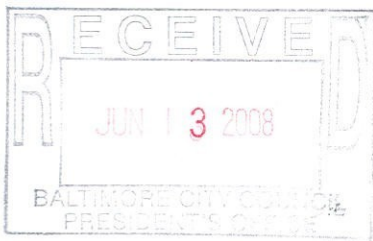
City Council Bill No.: **08-0046 – Firearms – Reporting Theft or Loss**

The Mayor's Office on Criminal Justice fully supports this legislation.

Mayor Dixon, the Baltimore City State's Attorney's Office, and the Baltimore Police Department are working tirelessly with federal, state, and local partners to reduce violence in Baltimore City. This effort is focused on going after the most violent offenders, getting illegal guns off the streets and engaging citizens in the fight against crime.

We are beginning to make progress – homicides and shootings in Baltimore are at two-decade lows. In order to continue on this positive trajectory, we must ensure that our law enforcement officials have the tools they need to get guns off the street.

We must limit access to the illegal guns that are so prevalently used in Baltimore's homicides and shootings. Getting illegal guns off the streets has become a top priority for the Baltimore Police Department – overall, the department has seized 1250 guns this year. Last year, the department seized 3462 guns. Baltimore City created the Gun Trace Task Force – a partnership between Baltimore City Police, Baltimore County Police, and the Maryland State Police. The Task Force targets gun dealers, traces guns used in violent crimes, and stems the flow of illegal weapons in Baltimore. So far this year, the Task Force has traced 2200 guns, has seized 398 guns, and has made 47 arrests.



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Task Force efforts have focused special scrutiny on the sources of the illegal guns used in Baltimore crimes. Many of these guns enter the illegal gun market through irresponsible or negligent gun ownership. National studies show that 25% of crime guns are acquired by theft. Due to the significant chance that a stolen gun will fall into the wrong hands, gun owners must act responsibly and report missing guns. When gun owners fail to report lost or stolen guns to police, police miss the opportunity to recover the gun. Additionally, because gun owners cannot currently be held accountable for the failure to report a lost or stolen weapon, this excuse has become a convenient cover for illegal secondary gun transfers. This loophole helps gun traffickers supply our streets with illegal guns.

We respectfully request your support in securing a favorable report on City Council Bill 08-0046.



Sheryl Goldstein

Director

Mayor's Office on Criminal Justice