

EXHIBIT A

JAMES W. JOHNSON
Chief of Police



"INTEGRITY...FAIRNESS...SERVICE"

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Dear Members of the Maryland State Senate:

I am writing to strongly urge you to support Senate Bill 281 as it passed the Judicial Proceedings Committee last week by a 7-4 vote. In particular, I strongly urge you to support the provisions in SB 281 that require prospective handgun purchasers to first obtain a license from the State Police with a fingerprint-based background check and safety training. The experience of my colleagues in the states that have such provisions, such as New Jersey and New York, is that fingerprint-based handgun purchaser licensing effectively deters people without criminal records from purchasing guns for those who are prohibited from buying guns themselves – what we call straw purchases. Because straw purchases hardly ever happen in these states, New Jersey and New York have dramatically lower gun death rates than we do here in Maryland. And, the guns that are used in crime in these states almost all were originally purchased in other states that do not have a fingerprint-based handgun purchase licensing system.

We, in law enforcement, are doing all we can do to stem the tide of gun violence in our society, but we need your help. Please pass SB 281, and please do not weaken the bill by removing key provisions such as the fingerprint requirement. If you do so, you will save many Marylanders, including law enforcement officers, from the tragic deaths and injuries caused by gun violence.

Sincerely,

James W. Johnson
Chief of Police

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