

May 16, 2007

The Honorable Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr.

President of the Senate  
State House  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Mr. President:

In accordance with Article II, Section 17 of the Maryland Constitution, today I have vetoed Senate Bill 497- *Disposal of Handguns Owned by a Law Enforcement Agency*.

Senate Bill 497 authorizes law enforcement agencies to dispose of agency owned handguns by selling, exchanging, or transferring the handguns to a manufacturer. Currently, these weapons may only be destroyed or sold to other law enforcement agencies, to retired officers, or to the officer to whom the handgun was issued.

Marylanders are all too familiar with the tragic effects of gun crimes. In my view, current law provides sufficient options for the disposal of law enforcement weapons. Police weapons should not be made potentially available outside of the law enforcement community. Citizens who seek to own a handgun have many options for purchasing those weapons; unneeded police handguns do not have to be added to existing inventories.

Some supporters of the bill argue that it will help local governments save money when purchasing new service weapons. However, a fiscal analysis of the bill revealed little or no impact on the overall finances of police agencies. In any event, significant legislation passed this Session to provide additional funding for local police departments. Senate Bill 130 and House Bill 611, which I will sign tomorrow, improve the State Aid for Police Protection Fund by increasing State funding from \$1,800 to \$1,950 per sworn officer employed by each qualifying municipality in FY 2009. This will result in an increase in municipal police aid of over \$235,000.

For the above stated reasons, I have vetoed Senate Bill 497.

Sincerely,

Martin O'Malley  
Governor