



**For Immediate Release**

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***O'Malley-Brown Call for  
Commonsense Ban on Assault Weapons  
Call on Ehrlich to Take Stand on Issue***

**ANNAPOLIS, MD (February 9, 2006)** – Today, Martin O'Malley and Anthony Brown called for a ban on certain firearms classified as assault weapons. Joined by Delegate Neil Quinter, as well as law enforcement officers and community leaders, O'Malley and Brown called on the General Assembly to pass the Maryland Assault Weapons Ban. This legislation became necessary when, last year, Congress failed to extend the now-expired 1994 federal ban on assault weapons.

“With Congress failing to strengthen our nation’s law, and at a time when homeland security should be paramount, we are taking this stand for our families and communities. The presence of military-style weapons on our streets represents an unacceptable risk to our neighborhoods and our children,” said O’Malley.

Several studies have shown that the bipartisan-supported assault weapons ban has been effective in reducing gun crime and saving lives. One report showed that the proportion of banned assault weapons traced to crime had dropped by more than 65% between 1995 and 2003. Prior to the federal law in 1994, assault weapons were used in more than 17 percent of fatal shootings of police officers – although they accounted for just 1 percent of guns. This same 1 percent of guns accounted for 8.4 percent of guns traced to crimes. At least one in five law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty is the victim of an assault weapon.

While in the Republican Congressional leadership, Bob Ehrlich opposed the federal assault weapon ban. Today, Ehrlich refuses to take a position on a proposed ban in the state.

“While Bob Ehrlich equivocates and sides with his out-of-touch friends in Washington, we are going to act to protect our families. This is not the time to hesitate; this is the time to act and move Maryland forward. I hope Governor Ehrlich will join us in supporting this commonsense measure to make our state stronger.” said Brown.

O'Malley and Brown both highlighted the fact that the legislation was narrowly tailored to highly dangerous weapons.

“It is important that we get these weapons of terror out of the hands of criminals – it is also important that we secure the right of Marylanders to protect themselves, to protect their families, and to hunt. That is why this legislation is narrowly tailored to cover a small class of weapons, like ‘Street Sweepers,’ that have no other purpose other than to kill people,” said O'Malley.

“As a soldier, I have held assault weapons of the kind envisioned by this bill in my hand, and I can tell you, unequivocally, that these weapons have no other aim than to kill people. These assault weapons are the weapon of choice of drug dealers, mass murderers and other criminals – not hunters,” added Brown.

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