
Written Testimony of Katie Novotny in Opposition of SB646

February 19, 2020

I am a member of Multiple Gun Rights organizations. Maryland Shall Issue, Associated Gun Clubs, Maryland State Rifle and Pistol Association, and the National Rifle Association. I am a certified Range Safety Officer with the NRA. I compete in multiple shooting events such as Steel Challenge, 3-gun, small bore, and vintage military rifle matches. I am an avid firearms collector. I oppose SB646.

This bill changes the word “would” to “could”. “Could” is used to indicate possibility. “Could gain access”. We all know that kids can do all kinds of surprising things. The internet is a big wide world where all kinds of things can be learned. Things like how to pick a lock. A quick internet search of the terms “how to pick a lock” brings up pages and pages of results. Complete with pictures, videos, links to where to purchase the tools required, or simply a list of household items that could be used. There is a YouTube channel called LockPickingLawyer.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCm9K6rby98W8JigLoZO6h6FQ/featured> He is a lawyer who lives in Maryland and creates videos which evaluate security devices. This illustrates how easy it is to access information on how to pick locks, although he has a disclaimer stating to not use any of his information for illegal purposes. He shows how easily defeated with readily available items, locks actually are.

<https://youtu.be/o0IYq8AhMJc> This video shows how easily a gun lock box is picked with readily available tools. <https://youtu.be/Chu4mvEUc5I> This video shows a gun safe being opened with an orange juice bottle. Hundreds of videos are available, and it really is quite educational on what items to avoid purchasing. The rabbit hole that is YouTube aside, this information illustrates how easily locks are defeated, and how pointless legislation like this is. Nearly any adolescent child has access to the internet at some point, and therefore can obtain this kind of information. This is why changing the word “could” from “would” is such a terrible idea.

Changing the law to include access to unloaded firearms instead of loaded firearms is also a gross overstep. Unloaded firearms are no danger at all, except as a blunt object, similar to a brick, and much less dangerous than items available in most households; Kitchen knives, box cutters, saws, power tools, household chemicals, and prescription drugs.

This proposed law is a direct violation of DC v. Heller, which protects the right to have a firearm for self-defense in the home.

As a firearms owner, I take responsibility for having my firearms stored safely. This protects my investment from damage caused by improper storage, as well as from theft. This bill, however is so hopelessly vague, that I don't know what is allowed. Historically, preventing a child from gaining ready access to a loaded firearm has been adequate. Law requires new handguns to leave the FFL with a lock. Project ChildSafe will provide cable locks for free. Under this proposed law, that is not adequate, because although it will prevent the loading and firing of a firearm, this bill prohibits contact with even an unloaded firearm. This law allows prosecution of a firearms owner who thought they had properly

secured their firearms in a manner considered generally reasonable by most people. However if a child does gain access, and does not even have to do anything with the firearm, if the police find out, under penalties in this bill, that person would then become a prohibited person. Over the possibility of a child coming in contact with an unloaded firearm.

There needs to be balance between public safety and rights. The current law does a fair job of treading that line. Unfortunately, sometimes things still happen. This bill is also unenforceable, unless the police are planning on going door to door to inspect storage devices. The only way anyone would likely know this law was violated was if the 3rd scenario happened, that a child does gain access and injures another or themselves. In that case, how is tacking on another meaningless sentence helping anyone heal from tragedy?

Because of these reasons above, I request an unfavorable report.

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