

February 26, 2020

WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF SCOTT G. DAVIS IN OPPOSITION TO HB910

I appreciate the opportunity to present my testimony in strong opposition to HB910 to the members of this committee this afternoon.

I am a business owner of an Architectural Drafting Service that I have nurtured over the past 20 years. Prior to that I spent 10 years as an Architectural draftsman and designer in a local Architectural firm. I am a lifelong Marylander but I am not a lifelong gun owner. Shooting and building firearms became a hobby of mine about 8 years ago. I went 42 years of my life without owning or shooting a single gun. All of that changed when I went to visit some of my in-laws in Tennessee back in 2012. I along with the entire family went outside to shoot some targets on their 100 acre property. There were about 15 of us with ages ranging from 7 years old to 70 years old, practicing firearms safety as well as having fun. That was the beginning of the removal of my lifelong "fear of guns".

Building firearms has become one of my favorite hobbies over the years. I enjoy building firearms from un-serialized 80 percent receivers for my own personal use. AR style receivers are my firearms of choice, mainly for target shooting purposes. I have invested a lot of money in tooling and a lot of money into the firearms.

There is a stigma attached to "80 percent receivers", "AR rifles/pistols" and so called "ghost guns". These terms translate to "untraceable firearms" in the political arena. The mere mention of those words seem to conjure up fear, murder & crime in the minds of people that are not familiar with the hobby of building such guns. I assure you that all of us law abiding citizens that partake in this hobby are not criminals. We are people that enjoy working with our hands, enjoy problem solving and enjoy reaping the benefits of our labor once a project is complete. There are many of us.

On page 5 of this bill, it is stated that a person may not "Possess" a firearm that is not imprinted with a serial number or an object that falls into the 80 percent receiver category. Under current law it is already illegal to sell, offer to sell, transfer, purchase or receive an 80 percent firearm that was home built. Under current law it *is* legal to build my own firearm for my own purposes and use. According to this bill there is no grandfathering of these completed firearms or receivers in their 80 percent state. This bill does not provide any clarification or instruction on how to make my existing firearms or 80 percent receivers compliant. Under current law I cannot give them away or sell them. I am stuck with them. I am left to assume that all of my home built, un-serialized guns and 80 percent receivers will be illegal to own after October 1, 2020 and I will become an instant criminal for possession. What am I supposed to do with these guns? How many innocent, law abiding lives does this panel find acceptable to ruin with stiff punishments, heavy fines and jail time by passing this bill? There are going to be far more law abiding people caught in this trap vs the virtually non-existent criminal activity that happens with these types of firearms. How many people can you statistically find that have used any of the types

of guns that are outlined in this bill for criminal activity in the State of Maryland? I prefer that we focus on the severe crime problems that we already have instead of focusing on the anticipation of something that has not happened or very rarely occurs.

I quote one of the Democratic Delegates that is in the room today as saying, "You can't just pass a bill and say, OK, crime is solved". – Baltimore Sun 2/21/2020

This is a very logical statement and I agree wholeheartedly. This statement was not in regards to this bill but this same reasoning applies to this bill, HB910. We can't just pass this bill and say, OK crime is solved. I do not understand why we, as a whole, are not applying this same logic when it comes to lawful abiding gun owners that enjoy building our own firearms for lawful purposes. This bill punishes home gun builders by creating criminals out of law abiding citizens.

The price that it takes to make a home built gun is equivalent to, or more, than it costs to buy the same gun that is already built by a manufacturer. We already know that statistically our crime problem is overwhelmingly committed by criminals using stolen handguns. It makes no sense for a criminal to research and buy an 80 percent kit, researching which particular type of expensive tooling to buy, purchasing all of the tooling and then learn how to build a firearm when they can simply buy a used, stolen gun for a small fraction of the price and without the hassles of researching, tooling and building. While the criminal closure rate remains very low in our state's high crime areas, law abiding gun owners and home builders tend to be the scapegoated group that takes the brunt of proposed legislation such as this bill.

It does nothing to stop homicides and suicides. Criminals do not follow the law. Even if *all* guns were banned and confiscated in this state, it will not change the mentality of the people that are committing homicides. You cannot merely take away a criminals gun and they, all of a sudden, just become happy, productive people. Their mental illness, anger, rage, desperation and angst is still there. They will simply move on to the next available tool to commit these atrocities. A meat cleaver purchased from Wal-Mart, a steel pipe purchased from Lowe's, or a baseball bat purchased from a sporting goods store have the potential to fulfill any killers desires... all without a background check and cost far less than a firearm let alone *building* a firearm.

When is the MGA going to move the focus of our homicide and suicide issues to a "people problem" instead of a "gun problem?" Until the MGA starts to focus on what drives these people to commit these crimes, address the issues and come up with common sense solutions, this homicide problem does not go away. Us law abiding gun owners are tired of being the Maryland General Assembly's scapegoat for gun crime.

I request an unfavorable report.

Sincerely,

Scott Davis

Scott G. Davis