

WRITTEN TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO SB 858 (February 21, 2023)

Submitted by Theodore E. Mathison
322 Lazywood Court
Millersville, MD 21108
Email: tem2@verizon.net; Ph: 410-987-9591

Senate Bill 858 Firearm Safety – Storage Requirements and Youth Suicide Prevention

I am writing to oppose SB 858 because the Bill takes the wrong approach in trying to prevent youth suicide, and the Bill is unworkable.

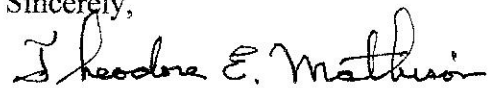
There are several national organizations in the United States that for years have pushed for firearms safety among both adults and youth by providing, in some cases, free of charge, individual firearm locks. Perhaps millions of these locks are in circulation. They operate by keys, and if the keys are kept in a secure location, the locks are very effective. With SB 858's requirement that firearms be stored in "...a locked container with a tamper resistant lock...", "or rendered inoperative", the locking devices already in circulation would be relegated to the scrap heap.

Further, the Bill does not define what "... a locked container with a tamper resistant lock..." means. Is the lock supposed to be impossible to pick, impervious to force or what? Thus, meeting the requirements of the Bill is in the eyes of the beholder which would make it difficult or impossible to enforce. Further, if requiring "lockable containers" is meant to mean gun safes, the cost for a firearms owner will be significant. Safes, depending upon the locking system and construction, can cost anywhere from several hundred dollars to well over \$1,400. The cheaper safes have rather simple locking systems and generally offer less security than the more expensive ones. Thus, SB 858, if enacted, will force some individuals who many own but one firearm to make a significant financial outlay, or if financially pressed, chose to ignore the Bill's provisions.

Accordingly, would it not be more appropriate and effective for the State of Maryland to build upon the programs that already provide firearms owners with individual firearm locking devices rather than pushing for storage requirements that are ill-defined and unlikely to be effective? The cost to the State would be rather insignificant in comparison to the safety benefit that would be derived.

I urge that SB 858 receive an unfavorable report.

Sincerely,



Theodore E. Mathison