



SB 784
Comprehensive Community Safety Funding Act

UNFAVORABLE

The Maryland State Rifle & Pistol Association (MSRPA) opposes SB 784 the Comprehensive Community Safety Funding Act.

The MSRPA is the official National Rifle Association state organization for Maryland. The MSRPA's mission is to defend our rights in Maryland, support training in firearm safety and shooting skills through its affiliated clubs, and sponsor and sanction local competition throughout the state.

This bill would raise additional taxes on firearm and ammunition manufacturers and dealers to fund the state's trauma systems. The Maryland Trauma Physician Services Fund is maintained through a \$5 surcharge on car registration renewals. It covers costs for uncompensated care, Medicaid-enrolled patients, and trauma related expenses and equipment grants. Income from vehicle registration fees, grants and reserves have subsidized the fund and will preserve the trauma system, but not for more than a few more years. The Maryland Health Care Commission recommended that the registration fee be raised to \$6, the better to support the network, as fees have not been raised since the early 2000s. However, Senator Elfreth has instead decided that lawful gun owners and the companies that make and sell the products those gun owners buy should be taxed even more.

There are problems with this proposal, including:

- We don't tax any other constitutional rights. This bill would infringe on law-abiding citizens' rights and abilities to self-defense, while doing little to address violent crime.
- Maryland has few firearm or ammunition manufacturers in the state, so how will the excise tax raise the estimated \$13 million additional funds needed, if there aren't a lot of companies to tax in the first place?
- Why should the average citizen be concerned about raising taxes on companies? The dirty little secret is that a tax on businesses is a tax on customers. Companies will not eat the costs of additional taxes, because they always pass them on to customers.
- At a press conference on January 17th Delegate Bernice Mireku-North (Montgomery) stated that the taxes would "come from firearms associated with mass shootings, which burden the state's trauma systems." Senator Sarah Elfreth (Anne Arundel) said the state's shock trauma center in Baltimore experienced an increase of patients of gunshot wounds from 5% in 2013 to 10% last year. So, it appears that the law abiding, tax paying citizens of Maryland will once again, bear the burden of violent criminals who did not pay taxes on the guns and ammunition that were probably stolen in the first place.

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Will Marylanders have to “bite the bullet” (pun intended) and refrain from further purchases of firearms, firearm accessories, and ammunition because of increased taxes? How will that contribute to Maryland’s tax base? Will Maryland businesses be able stay competitive with the companies making and selling firearms in neighboring states: Pennsylvania, Delaware, Virginia, and West Virginia? This could cost people in Maryland their jobs, and they may have to move to more tax-friendly states. Are legislators Mireku-North and Elfreth considering the effects on medical care for the needy and Maryland’s economy, or is this really all about gun control?

The MSRPA respectfully requests an UNFAVORABLE report on SB 784.

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