



Delaware-Maryland Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

Testimony prepared for the
Judiciary Committee
on
House Bill 947
February 28, 2024
Position: **Favorable**

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify for public safety as a human right. I am Lee Hudson, assistant to the bishop for public policy in the Delaware-Maryland Synod, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, a faith community with three judicatories across our State.

Our community has stated support for adequate weapons regulation as an essential for public security and safety. At this point the American public has substantially come into agreement with most of our community's commitments on the subject, according to polling data.

It is also reliably reported that the primary reason the American landscape is a free-fire zone is that, uniquely among commercial product sold to the public, firearms have been exempted from legislated safety standards and regulation. We do not do to weapons what we do to appliances, vehicles, and other implements. This is on purpose: here is that narrative from the Giffords.org webpage—

The Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act and Child Safety Lock Act of 2005 ("PLCAA" and "CSLA") provided the gun industry with immunity from most tort liability. The PLCAA prohibited a "qualified civil liability action" from being brought in any state or federal court and required immediate dismissal of any such action upon the date the PLCAA was enacted (October 26, 2005). The strategy that birthed the American free-fire zone removed manufacturers from any possibility of civil accountability for their products. Again, this is so exceptional as to be without example; or warrant.

House Bill 947 re-authorizes members of the Maryland public to initiate civil actions when a manufacturer's product causes harm. It is apparent that juries are becoming receptive to this right, despite all else. Certainly, the members of this Committee know that the harm being caused by the product is the most extreme there can possibly be.

Thus, we implore your favorable report.

Lee Hudson