

February 7, 2025

The Honorable William C. Smith Jr.
Chair, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Senate Bill 577 – Public Safety – Distribution of Literature to Purchasers of Firearms and Ammunition

Dear Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

On behalf of the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF), America's trade association for hunting and recreational shooting sports, I write to express our strong opposition to Senate Bill 577 ("SB 577"). This bill imposes unnecessary and duplicative requirements on federally licensed firearm and ammunition retailers without providing any demonstrable public safety benefit.

Background on NSSF and Industry Safety Initiatives

The National Shooting Sports Foundation, along with our industry members, actively supports voluntary programs such as the NSSF's Project ChildSafe[®], Operation Secure Store[®], Don't Lie for the Other Guy[™], and FixNICS[®]. These programs provide millions of free gun locks, along with safety and education materials to promote responsible firearm ownership.

Opposition to SB 577

SB 577 is both unnecessary and burdensome to law-abiding businesses for several reasons:

1. Duplicative and Redundant Regulations
 - Federal and state laws already mandate extensive background checks, safety training, and waiting periods for firearm purchasers.
 - Licensed firearms dealers already provide comprehensive firearm safety materials at the point of sale, making additional state-mandated literature redundant and ineffective.
2. Unjustified Burden on Small Businesses
 - SB 577 imposes new compliance requirements on licensed firearm dealers and ammunition sellers, many of which are small businesses.
 - The bill fails to allocate funding to cover the costs of distributing, storing, and tracking these materials, placing financial and administrative strain on retailers.

3. Unenforceable and Vague Language
 - The bill grants county health departments the authority to issue citations but does not provide clear enforcement guidelines or define what constitutes compliance.
 - This opens the door to arbitrary enforcement and inconsistent penalties across different counties.
4. No Measurable Impact on Public Safety
 - There is no evidence that requiring retailers to distribute additional pamphlets will reduce firearm-related accidents, suicides, or crime.
 - Resources would be better spent on supporting proven firearm safety programs, such as those listed above.

Conclusion

SB 577 creates unnecessary regulatory burdens for law-abiding businesses, duplicates existing efforts, and lacks measurable public safety benefits. Rather than imposing additional mandates on responsible retailers, Maryland should focus on supporting voluntary firearm safety initiatives that have a proven track record of success.

Sincerely,

Christopher G. Kopacki, Ph.D.