

## Written Testimony of Jesse Ferguson, resident of Caroline County, Maryland, in Opposition to SB0208

I am a hard-working husband, father of two young girls, and a native of Maryland's Eastern Shore. I am also an avid hunter, firearms collector, and participant in all manners of competition involving shooting and firearms. I am opposed to SB0208 because it criminalizes, and severely punishes, activities which have been commonplace for hundreds of years and do not harm the public in any way.

Despite what you may hear in testimony today, the truth is that this bill offers absolutely no public safety benefits. It would not have prevented the tragedy at the Capital Gazette in Annapolis. It would not reduce the appalling number of murders happening in Baltimore City. This bill is a solution in search of a problem. This bill, if passed, is a clear indication that Maryland lawmakers are unable to understand the serious issues that contribute to criminal violence in the state and are unwilling to address those issues. This bill, if passed, only serves to make criminals of law-abiding citizens while trampling their Constitutional rights as well as the rights to their property. Property (rifles/shotguns) which is very seldom used in crime.

In my years of being involved in the collecting of firearms, hunting with firearms, and engaging in shooting competitions with firearms, I have loaned, been loaned, sold, traded, and purchased rifles and shotguns from family members, friends, fellow hunters, and competition shooters. This is a very common occurrence that law-abiding Marylanders have been engaged in since the inception of the state. If passed into law, SB0208 would criminalize this activity and offer punishment that exceeds current penalties for stealing a firearm.

SB0208 targets class of firearms that is statistically very rarely used in crime. According to FBI data for the year 2017 (<https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2017/crime-in-the-u.s.-2017/tables/table-20>) rifles and shotguns were used the state of Maryland a combined 8 times to commit murder. Handguns, which are more heavily regulated in Maryland, were used 339

times. The numbers are similar for nearly every year one chooses to examine, and not only for Maryland, but for any state in the U.S. Not only that, but other weapons such as knives and even hands and feet are used to commit murders on a larger scale than rifles and shotguns. Again, this bill is a solution to a problem that does not exist.

I cannot fathom what problem is trying to be solved by this bill and I don't understand the message being sent to citizens of the state of Maryland by the author or any legislator that would support this bill. We have had an annual murder rate in Baltimore city that has exceeded 300 deaths per year for the past 4 years! The overwhelming majority of these murders were committed with handguns which, in Maryland, already require a background check for any transfer as well as a 7-day waiting period. These laws do not deter criminal use of handguns that result in such tragically high numbers of murders! Why are we even discussing a bill such as SB0208 in light of the other pressing problems being faced by residents of this state?

Sincerely,

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