

Good morning senators. My name is Levi Peterson. I am 14 years old and am a hunter -- but have nothing on my grandma. She killed one of the largest deer in the state of Missouri.

Unfortunately for me, interest in firearms skipped a generation. My dad isn't interested. Fortunately, a friend of his, Jim -- a retired deputy sheriff -- takes me hunting.

There's a shotgun trap club up the road from our house, where my dad takes me with one of my grandma's old shotguns.

But how many kids have guns from their deer-killing grandmas? What if we had no guns, and Jim said to my dad, "Here, I've got extra shotguns. Go ahead and take one of mine for awhile."

Under this legislation, such an act would be considered an illegal transfer because there was no background check through a gun dealer who charges a license fee. One might wonder if this bill is sponsored by the Gun Dealers of America. ;-)

But I know that's not the intent of this bill. The intent is to keep people from loaning their guns to people who have not been appropriately vetted. I understand that. And I respect that you have added exceptions to cover when my 4H leader Mr. Farmer loans guns during club shooting events.

But it does not cover my example with Jim. Or others for which this bill becomes merely a burden on law-abiding citizens.

What is the real-world problem this is trying to solve? Is it to reduce the number of homicides in Baltimore city, which totaled 348 last year? I hope that's the intent. But this bill wouldn't do that. See, criminals, by definition, are people who break laws. Attempting to require a background check and a fee on criminals is not going to change the outcome of the crime, because the criminals will not comply with this legislation.

So if Baltimore homicides are the concern, what is the solution? Well, Barack Obama said, "We know the statistics — that children who grow up without a father are five times more likely to commit crime; and 20 times more likely to end up in prison." I don't know what the solution is. But I'm pretty sure it has nothing to do with making my dad get a background check and pay a fee to borrow Jim's gun. The only change this bill creates is for law-abiding citizens to find themselves further overwhelmed by trying to be compliant with well-intentioned but ineffective laws.

Your time in legislative session is precious. Good bills can help solve real-world problems. This is not one of them.