



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB

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**Senate Bill 208 Public Safety –Rifles and Shotguns –Secondary Transactions
Senate Judicial Proceedings –
February 5, 2020
SUPPORT**

Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony concerning an important priority of the **Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club (WDC)** for the 2020 legislative session. With more than 600 politically active women and men, including many elected officials, WDC is one of the largest and most active Democratic Clubs in Montgomery County.

WDC urges the passage of SB208. SB208 closes a critical gap in Maryland's regulation of firearms. Currently, gun purchasers are required to undergo background checks for all purchases of handguns, but are not required to undergo background checks when purchasing rifles or shotguns from unlicensed sellers. As a result, domestic abusers, felons, and other individuals with dangerous histories – who are otherwise legally prohibited from purchasing guns – are able to obtain shotguns and rifles through online sales or at gun shows from unlicensed sellers. SB208 addresses this serious vulnerability by requiring that a transfer of rifles or shotguns must include a criminal background check, even for unlicensed sellers. SB208 also includes strong penalties, including up to five years imprisonment and an up to \$10,000 fine for violation.

WDC's advocacy work focuses on legislation affecting women and children. The current loophole in Maryland's gun laws puts women and children who are subject to domestic abuse and intimate partner violence further in harm's way by making it easier for their abusers to go undetected in private sales of shotguns or rifles. Instead, background checks must be employed to identify these individuals and stop sales to those subject to orders of protection or extreme risk protection orders (EPROs). Maryland's women – and all Marylanders – deserve better protection under our state laws.

We ask for your support for SB208 and strongly urge a favorable committee report.

Respectfully,

Diana Conway
President