

NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

INSTITUTE FOR LEGISLATIVE ACTION

11250 WAPLES MILL ROAD

FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA 22030



NRA

February 5, 2020

Senator William C. Smith Jr.
Miller Senate Office Building, 2 East Wing
11 Balden Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: OPPOSITION TO SENATE BILL 208

Dear Chairman and Committee Members:

The National Rifle Association (NRA) opposes restrictions on the private transfer of firearms in all cases, however, this bill is overreaching and unnecessarily restrictive. The legislation creates a blanket prohibition for long gun private transfers, effectively criminalizing private transfer of rifles and shotguns in Maryland, thus infringing our rights as citizens while doing nothing to promote public safety.

The exemptions are unnecessarily narrow and do not consider the reality of the facilitation of transfer. First, the legislation neglects to contemplate any number of close relations, such as great-grandparents and great-grandchildren, cousins, in-laws, lifelong friends, or neighbors. The hunting exemption does not allow for the transfer until the moment the activity begins on site. Finally, the self-defense exemption is so extremely narrow, the "imminent" language would bar the private transfer of a firearm until the moment an attacker was upon the transferee.

This misguided legislation would not have any substantial effect on crime or public safety, the firearms Maryland is targeting are some of the least prone to criminal misuse. FBI data from 2017 shows rifles are used in less than 3 percent of homicides, which is much less than blunt objects, sharp objects or bodily force. Maryland already bans the private transfer of firearms it categorizes as "regulated firearms" including any handgun and commonly-owned semi-automatic firearms. The proposed law offers no added protection to the public, but only infringes upon and restricts law-abiding gun-owning citizen's rights.

Sincerely,

David Weber
Maryland State Director
NRA-ILA