

Robert Cowan
President, Arlington Rifle and Pistol Club, Inc.
12023 Yellow Bell Lane
Columbia, Maryland 21044
Email: robcow1@gmail.com

Subject: Request an Amendment to Senate Bill 208 – Request an Amendment to SB 208 Bill that would remove requirement to transfer a rifle or shotgun if the loaning of a rifle or shotgun is between known parties for sporting purposes. The transfer exception for a loan was in the version that the Senate passed last year.

Senate Bill 208 would end Youth competitive shooting teams in Maryland: I'm president of Arlington Rifle and Pistol Club, a not for profit organization. We support area youth shooting programs, 4H, Scouts and our club has an extremely successful Arlington Juniors Rifle Program. Five of our Juniors have earned athletic rifle scholarships to college. One of our ladies is now a Midshipman at the United States Naval Academy and is on the USNA Rifle Team. Another one of our ladies has been accepted to both the United States Naval Academy and United States Air Force Academy and after making her decision as to which she will attend the academy and will be on their rifle team. One of the ladies who is has a rifle scholarship and is a freshman at Old Miss University is now ranked 20th in the nation. One of our young men earned a rifle scholarship to Ohio State and is on their rifle team. Another young lady earned a rifle scholarship to North Carolina State.

Our Juniors compete in local, regional and national tournaments across the country. Eight of our Juniors competed at the U.S. Naval Academy last month. One of our Junior ladies won two gold medals and one of our young men and one of our young ladies also won a bronze medals. The young lady who won two gold medals, will be competing in the U.S. Junior Olympic Games in Colorado Springs. Arlington Rifle and Pistol Clubs range is in Baltimore County, but our club members live throughout the state of Maryland. Arlington holds youth rifle competitions at our range, where competitors from across the region and country compete. We have teamed up with the Civilian Marksmanship Program and will be hosting their Regional Target Sprint Match in October.

This sport is very expensive. The basic equipment needed to compete in this sport costs approximately \$5,000 each and is prohibitive for most of our

parents. Our club has fundraisers throughout the year to support this program, but money is very tight for our not for profit organization.

My daughter when she was in Elementary School wanted to learn how to play the cello. It was not practical, nor could we afford to buy a \$5,000 cello for her. Not to mention we would have ended up buying three different cellos until she was fully grown and obtained the level of proficiency she obtained after graduating from College. It is the same circumstance with a competition rifle, except you can't rent a competition rifle anywhere. It has to be furnished from a gun club.

The cost of club Junior rifles range from \$1,900 to \$3,400 each. The \$3,400 rifle is a used one. The newer version is well over \$5,000. Last year, we had four new Junior team members that we needed to equip. Instead of having to turn them away, we were able to purchase four new rifles from the Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP) through their deferred payment program. This program allows us to make payments of 20% every six months to the CMP over a two-year period.

After a Junior demonstrates proficiency and a commitment to competing in this sport, we issue approximately \$5,000 worth of equipment and rifles to our Junior Club parents, so they can bring their Junior to the range for individual practice. Our team training for rifle is one day a week. The parents must bring their Junior to the range with their rifle to get additional practice and to compete in Local, Regional and National Tournaments. There is no way that our Juniors could compete at the regional or national level, if we were not allowed to loan rifles to the parents. We are not allowed to store firearms or ammunition at the range. The Juniors all have busy schedules, with school, science fairs, dance, Scouts, etc. Each parent has to find time to bring their junior to the range for their individual practice when they can and to other ranges for regional and national tournaments.

Transfer ownership of a rifle: Senate Bill 208 requires our club to transfer the rifle to the parent.

SB208 would require that our club transfer the ownership of the rifle to the parent and would also create problems when the Junior improved and outgrew a rifle or there was a change in our board of directors as to who owns the club rifles. We would have to continuously transfer ownership of the rifle. This would be expensive, not to mention impractical.

**** The bill does not allow for modern families. Same sex couples or couples that are not married, families who share custody, but have non-married adults bringing the Junior to the range or tournaments would be breaking the law. These days' modern families pitch in together to support the activities of our Juniors. It is not unusual for the Juniors biological mothers partner to bring the daughter to small-bore rifle practice or a tournament instead of her father. It is not possible to transfer the rifle every time a different parent or significant other brings the Junior to practice or a tournament.***

Women: Our club sponsors Women On Target (WOT) Training where women teach other women firearms safety and competence. These classes are extremely popular. Each class has approximately 20 – 24 women participants. There is a nominal charge for the classes, which covers the cost of food, targets and ammunition. Club members loan their .22 caliber rifles to the women volunteers who are Certified Instructors to use while teaching the class. We have 25 lanes where women are shooting; we need to have enough firearms loaned to the instructors to teach the class. This bill would require that our club members transfer ownership of their firearms to the instructors or stay at the range and stand in the classroom and remain with the ladies for the duration of the training program. This would be impractical and expensive. It would take several weeks to do this and cost so much money that this bill would end this valuable program.

Helping a neighbor or friend: I have neighbors who ask me to store their firearms whenever they are deployed, go on vacation or have work done on their house. One of my neighbors has family heirloom shotguns from her father who is in assisted living. She has asked me to store them for her. With this bill, we would have to pay to transfer each of the rifles and shotguns, whenever I did this for anyone. The cost of doing this is extreme.

Repairs: This bill would require gun owners would to transfer ownership of their firearms to a gunsmith or to send their firearm to a manufacturer when a repair is needed or when there is a recall.

Penalty is greater to loan a firearm than it is to steal one: The penalty for violating this bill loaning a rifle or shotgun would be imprisonment not exceeding 5 years or a fine not exceeding \$10,000 or both. Loaning a rifle or shotgun, which under current law, is perfectly legal. Under current law, the penalty for stealing a firearm is imprisonment not to exceed 6 months in jail. Anyone convicted or

even receiving probation before judgment, for loaning a rifle or shotgun would become a prohibited person. They would lose their right to own a firearm for the rest of their life. If someone steals a firearm, the penalty is not to exceed six months. This would not make them a prohibited person. They could legally own a firearm.

Broken Promises: In 2013, hunters and sports competitors were told by the Governor that there was no need for them to worry about Maryland requiring rifles and shotguns to be regulated like handguns. The Maryland Legislation laws have not been targeting criminals who commit gun crime, but are placing unwitting honest citizens at risk of becoming criminals.

Ineffective and unfair Gun Laws: Maryland Gun laws have been ineffective, because they target legally owned firearms owned by honest citizens, instead of stolen firearms used by criminals. A perfect example is how stealing a firearm is a misdemeanor and how under this bill loaning a firearm will cause both parties to serve up to 5 years in jail and \$10,000.

Request an Amendment to SB 208 that would remove requirement to transfer a rifle or shotgun if the loaning of a rifle or shotgun is between known parties for sporting purposes. The transfer exception for a loan was in the Bill that the Senate passed last year.