

My name is Joshua Michael, I am a Germantown, Maryland resident, competitive sport shooter, college student, and registered Democrat.

February 7<sup>th</sup> 2018 was for a few minutes, the worst day of my life. I was in my Calculus 1 class at Montgomery College listening to the lecture my Professor was giving when all of a sudden I heard the buzz of a dozen or more phones. I picked up my phone to check my messages but before I could look, a classmate of mine awkwardly interrupted the Professor and said "Umm MC Alert says there is an active shooter on campus." It took a few seconds for that sentence to sink in. I signed in to my phone as quickly as possible to see for myself and low-and-behold there it was. My Professor verified the message and told us to turn off the lights, lock the door, and wait for any more instruction.

The awkwardness of the situation quickly changed to deafening silence as each person, too afraid to voice their concerns, sat in terrified muteness. My thoughts immediately went to my family, and I texted my Dad to tell him what was going on. Diligent as he is responding to text messages and emails he responded within seconds telling me to shelter in place and to stay quiet. Although he tried his best to show stoicism over the text messages, we both knew the truth of the wild emotional swings we were both going through at the time. I told him I loved him thinking that this could maybe be my last contact with my family I would have.

I felt completely powerless, I have never and most likely will never feel that sense of emotional dread and hopelessness that comes with your life not being in your hands. Some horrible excuse for a human-being could kick down that door and kill me and I was powerless to stop it. But something strange happened after just a few minutes of this hopelessness. My fear and worry turned to anger. Not at someone or something else for cursing me or putting me in this horrible situation, but at myself.

I was felt like such an idiot. I was a gun owner and could have had a pistol with me to defend myself in this situation. The one tool that I could use to have a chance at living if some evil person kicked down that door was left at home stored in a safe. All the training I received, all the time I spent at the range practicing my marksmanship for competitions, wasted because I was following a law I believe to be unjust. In order to get a Concealed Carry Permit in Maryland, an applicant needs to have a "Good and Substantial Reason" in order to be approved. Wanting to defend myself against someone wanting to hurt me apparently is not good or substantial enough to warrant the State allowing me to legally defend myself outside of the home. To make matters worse even if I was approved to carry, I still could not carry inside of my classroom because Maryland does not allow you to carry inside of Public Schools including Montgomery College.

I sat in that room for what was the worst 7 minutes of my life hating myself for not just ignoring the laws and carrying anyways. A choice that if this active shooter alert had been accurate would have saved my life if someone came through that door. At 1:10 PM a second text came through

"MC ALERT: ALL CLEAR. THERE IS NO ARMED PERSON. THE MESSAGE SENT WAS IN ERROR. THERE IS NO THREAT."

My classmates and I breathed a sigh of relief and reluctantly went back to our lecture. I texted my Dad and told him I was okay and that the message was sent in error. I drove home that night and spent just a little extra time with my family and thought long and hard about what had just happened. I am a law abiding citizen and I do not concealed carry in Maryland. But every time I enter a classroom, I am keenly aware that I am less safe than I am in my own home because of these laws.

Unless the General Assembly repeals these laws I will likely never be able to legally carry in my home State. My testimony today is not for myself but for others who can carry in this state. For the love of god, please do not restrict the ability of people to carry not only on Public School grounds but Private School grounds as well. Do not disarm law-abiding trained students and leave them defenseless against the evil that is out there in the world.

I urge the Committee to issue an unfavorable report on HB-302.