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*Written Testimony of Katie Novotny in Opposition of HB636*

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February 19, 2020

I am a member of Multiple Gun Rights organizations. Maryland Shall Issue, Associated Gun Clubs, Maryland State Rifle and Pistol Association, and the National Rifle Association. I am a certified Range Safety Officer with the NRA. I compete in multiple shooting events such as Steel Challenge, 3-gun, small bore, and vintage military rifle matches. I am an avid firearms collector. I oppose HB636.

This bill changes the word “would” to “could”. “Could” is used to indicate possibility. “Could gain access”. We all know that kids can do all kinds of surprising things. The internet is a big wide world where all kinds of things can be learned. Things like how to pick a lock. A quick internet search of the terms “how to pick a lock” brings up pages and pages of results. Complete with pictures, videos, links to where to purchase the tools required, or simply a list of household items that could be used. There is a YouTube channel called LockPickingLawyer.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCm9K6rby98W8JigLoZO6h6FQ/featured> He is a lawyer who lives in Maryland and creates videos which evaluate security devices. This illustrates how easy it is to access information on how to pick locks, although he has a disclaimer stating to not use any of his information for illegal purposes. He shows how easily defeated with readily available items, locks actually are.

<https://youtu.be/o0IYq8AhMJc> This video shows how easily a gun lock box is picked with readily available tools. <https://youtu.be/Chu4mvEUc5I> This video shows a gun safe being opened with an orange juice bottle. Hundreds of videos are available, and it really is quite educational on what items to avoid purchasing. The rabbit hole that is YouTube aside, this information illustrates how easily locks are defeated, and how pointless legislation like this is. Nearly any adolescent child has access to the internet at some point, and therefore can obtain this kind of information. This is why changing the word “could” from “would” is such a terrible idea.

Changing the law to include access to unloaded firearms instead of loaded firearms is also a gross overstep. Unloaded firearms are no danger at all, except as a blunt object, similar to a brick, and much less dangerous than items available in most households; Kitchen knives, box cutters, saws, power tools, household chemicals, and prescription drugs.

This proposed law is a direct violation of DC v. Heller, which protects the right to have a firearm for self-defense in the home.

Finally, this is an attack on youth hunters. Under current law, 16 and 17 year olds who hold a hunter safety card, are able to hunt alone. Those who have not grown up around hunting or firearms may find this thought appalling. There is nothing about turning 18 that suddenly makes someone responsible enough to do so. These are youth who have demonstrated safety and responsibility, have proven themselves through training, and are the future of wildlife management and conservation. It is unnecessary to prohibit them from this lawful activity.

Because of these reasons above, I request an unfavorable report.

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