

February 9, 2021

RE: SB479 Testimony

Position: Unfavorable

This bill, as I understand the language, has tricky or “gotcha” language that leaves broad room for interpretation that can criminalize responsible, normal and lawful possession and use of firearms in the state of Maryland. “Could gain access” for a 17 year old is an undefined and unlimited opportunity space. A 17 year old or younger with a brain and normal physical abilities could gain access to a safe or lockbox or a difficult to reach location. This can also include home intruders, conceivably, that could act to steal weapons and misuse them, criminalizing the owner of the firearm stolen.

The same gotcha language occurs with regard to storing of unloaded firearms being rendered inoperable to a child (17 years or younger). This is not possible with any firearm, operable to an 18 year old and older but inoperable to a 17 year old or younger.

Then there is the provision that a child with a certificate of firearm and hunter safety issued by the State cannot access the ammunition required to operate a weapon even with access to a weapon. Unless the purpose of said weapon is not hunting but some kind of show and tell, this effectively outlaws any minor with such a certificate from operating a weapon for the purpose of hunting of any kind. This neutering of the firearm safety certificate not only represents a conflict, it can easily be interpreted as purposefully arranged to entrap law abiding firearms owners.

I recommend voting emphatically against this Senate bill.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Karl E. Walinskas". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Karl Walinskas
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