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*Written Testimony of Katie Novotny in Support of HB0538*

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February 8, 2021

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 support HB0538.

Throughout this pandemic, we have heard time and time again how essential our nurses, doctors, firefighters, emt's, etc. are. Let's show them that we do care deeply about their safety by ensuring that they have the option to defend themselves if they choose to do so. Many people in these high risk occupations arrive to and leave from work in the wee hours of the morning. At my local hospital, they face a very long walk to their car that is parked in a distant lot, down a street that is not part of the hospital campus. The parking garage and lots surrounding the building are reserved for patients. These people deserve the right to be able to make the choice to carry a firearm for self-defense.

Prescription note pads are very valuable. Possession, or the possibility of possession makes those eligible to write prescriptions at risk. Corrections and parole and probation officers may face people wishing to enact revenge for perceived slights they faced while in custody or during parole or probation. Firefighters and EMT's have faced violence in recent years as they respond to calls. They often do not have police officers present to protect them. Additionally, volunteer firefighters and EMT's often leave their homes in all hours of the day or night to respond to calls, leaving them vulnerable to those who wish to do them harm.

I believe all citizens who are not prohibited persons should have the right to carry a firearm for personal protection, but since that is not currently possible in this state, this bill at least protects those individuals who by their profession, may face a higher risk than most.

Because of these reasons above, I request a favorable report.

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