

HB175

OPPOSE

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I have learned by experience that when seconds count, our wonderful police officers are minutes away. On that fateful day when I learned that lesson, I decided to become a safe, educated citizen who could protect her family if ever threatened again. That's how this mom became educated, involved, an advocate and an instructor who volunteers her time so that other women can do the same.

I tell you that I am not alone, as so many millions of women have also decided to protect their families with safe and legal firearm ownership. That is especially true this year as we deal with increased crime from prolonged economic losses during this pandemic.

How does this bill affect moms like me? It adds processes, burden and cost to ammunition. This year, after the pandemic hit, ammunition became extremely difficult to find and very expensive. Sometimes, the only alternative source was to purchase ammunition one or two boxes at a time, or to stand in line alerting the entire world (and those down on their luck) that you were going to be coming out of a gun shop soon with something of value. All this so that we could safely, legally and appropriately train with the firearm that we have chosen to protect our families with.

We are already at the point where moms and single women in Maryland can barely find or afford ammunition; vital for necessary safe and continual training. That mom in a high crime area who is barely financially hanging on through a pandemic cannot afford the additional cost of that background check. She cannot accommodate the extra burden of standing in a long time at a gun shop, making her a target the moment she leaves the same store with her costly purchase. Who will protect her when she leaves that store and tries to go home? Perhaps she will give up. Then what would happen to her or her children when she needed immediate self defense, but couldn't because she had no ammunition and the police were minutes away? She is exactly why this bill should not move forward.

As a volunteer firearms instructor, I'd like to help you learn about the process for purchasing firearms. You see, NICS background checks are already part of the purchasing process. When it comes to handguns in Maryland, the purchase process comes with the extra financial burden of classes and livescan fingerprints only to have that added onto the NICS check for every single purchase. So you see, NICS backgrounds are already a part of the process. There is no need to add this expensive, timely and logistical burden to ammunition.

What we are speaking out against is language that does not take the many issues described here into account. We are also speaking out against legislation that would do nothing to prevent the next crime but do everything to harm women like me. For example, did you know that anywhere between 60,000 to 2.5 million lives are saved every year by citizens that use a firearm in a defensive situation? Much like I might have had to do that horrible day when my family was threatened. That data comes from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention; that data was obtained by studies from the CDC's scientists themselves; a source we are told to trust.

So today, I am asking you to take the brave step of voting 'no' on this bill. Please, take the brave step to support the women like in Maryland. Please, take the brave step to ask any of us instructors to provide information on the purchase process of firearms and explain how the NICS system is already in place on the firearm end of the transaction.

Please, take the very, very brave step to support the ability of folks like me to protect themselves in those scary minutes before the police arrive.