

SB0387 – Written Testimony of Unfavorable Position

Senate Bill 0387 is an unfocused, unproductive piece of legislation that will have virtually no impact on improving the core crime rates in Maryland and may even serve to increase violent crime. This bill will only serve to further alienate, subjugate, and criminalize existing law-abiding residents who have responsibly created their own firearms from a “kit”. It is already illegal for a convicted felon to own a firearm so this bill would not in any way prevent those parties from holding illegal firearms either stolen or trafficked in from out of state. Furthermore, there is nothing to prevent anyone from destroying the serial engraving on an existing trafficked firearm.

According to Baltimore Magazine, nearly two thirds of all seized firearms have been illegally trafficked from out of state. There is a growing business of weapons trafficking to states with strict gun laws that inhibit law abiding citizens from purchasing and/ or creating their own firearms. This bill would further fuel that black market and put more money in the pockets of those who do not wish to positively impact our communities. We need to address the root causes of why we in Baltimore have one of the highest per capita murder rates in the nation, which can even compare to murder rates in violet third world countries. The answer is not the ease of access to legally owned firearms. We need to stop this misguided attack on firearms and focus on the root causes of crime so we can truly revive our cities.

Lastly, I fear this bill will further the legislative assault on minority and impoverished communities and result in more imprisonment and more destroyed lives with unnecessary gun charges. Our goal is to stop gun violence, not to destroy more lives and create more criminal records. That is why I consider this bill unfocused. Where are all the efforts to understand why someone would want to use a gun on another person in the first place? Why are we continuing to let our inner-city public schools crumble while just outside the city we have some of the best educational systems in the nation? Is it the “ghost guns”? No, that is just another distraction from our true issues so that we can feel like we did something while not actually achieving anything all and potentially making the problem worse. It’s extremely tiring to see this time and time again. I want to make real progress where our youth aren’t thrust into a permanent life of criminal activity by a state that does not seem to actually care about them, but only wants to toss them in jail.

Thank you for hearing my position on this bill. Maryland needs to lead less with an iron fist and more with a helping hand. Let’s not place further restrictions on legal gun owners. Let’s not amplify an already thriving firearms black market and let’s focus on the people who desperately need our support, not our handcuffs.

References:

<https://www.baltimoremagazine.com/section/community/iron-pipeline-gun-violence-out-of-state-traffickers/>