



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony of Senator Jill P. Carter
In Favor of SB 773
- Public Safety – Firearms Dealers – Storage Vaults for Regulated
Firearms -
Before the Judicial Proceedings Committee
On March 15, 2022**

**Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the
Committee:**

Senate Bill 773, as amended, will provide a tax credit to those who purchase and utilize a safety instrument to store their guns. The bill will encourage people to purchase gun safes at the point of sale by providing them with a financial incentive to do so. The bill balances the need for gun safety reform with the rights of citizens under the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

As we all would agree, the epidemic of gun violence in our country must come to an end. Unfortunately, across Maryland, we have seen a rise in firearm misuse, leading to the painful destruction of lives and communities. A storage vault, such as a safe, ensures that a gun is accessible only by its owner or an intended user, and protects the safety of families and children.

Throughout the country, states of varying political leanings have implemented a similar tax credit. Massachusetts, Maine, Connecticut, New Jersey, Washington, and Michigan all offer financial incentives for safety devices. Joining these states will solidify Maryland's commitment to firearm safety. As one state senator said, "If guns are not stored properly, tragedy can come when we least expect it."

Introducing a tax credit is one practical way to encourage and promote good gun safety habits.

Senate Bill 773 will encourage better home safety, the reduction of unauthorized use and accidental discharge, and an increase in the purchase of convenient storage devices. Estimates show that 30 percent of Marylanders lawfully own a gun, with 103,109 registered firearms in the state.¹ From 2019 to 2021, the number of applications exponentially increased at a rate far above population growth.² Between 2012 and 2017, individuals stole 15,924 guns, costing an estimated value of over seven million dollars. People do not just steal guns from off of the streets; 674 firearms were stolen from dealers.³ We must regulate gun safety through common-sense legislation that does not create substantial burdens on owners.

In 2021, burglars stole 21 guns from a Harford County pawnshop after driving their car into the building. By the time police arrived on the scene at 5:15 am, the thieves were gone.⁴ Thirty years earlier, robbers stole 15 guns from a Baltimore County shop in just minutes. Had storage vaults been utilized in either of these cases, guns would not be on the street and possibly in the hands of criminals.⁵

Utilizing a gun safe is an easy and modest way to ensure community protection; this is a small price to pay for community safety. We must ask ourselves, how much is one life worth?

We need to do all we can to protect Marylanders and ensure firearm safety. A broad coalition of gun-rights advocates and gun-regulation champions have partnered to support this bill, including Moms Demand Action and the National Shooting Sports Foundation.

Given this, I ask for a favorable report on Senate Bill 773.

¹ <https://worldpopulationreview.com/state-rankings/gun-ownership-by-state>

²

<https://www.heraldmillmedia.com/story/news/local/2021/04/25/number-of-civilian-gun-applications-approved-in-md-doubles/43723847/>

³ <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/gun-theft-united-states-state-state-analysis/>

⁴ <https://www.wbal.com/article/23-guns-stolen-burglary-harford-county-pawn-shop/38635583>

⁵ <https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/bs-xpm-1992-02-06-1992037128-story.html>

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jill P. Carter". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "J" and a distinct "P" and "C".

Jill P. Carter