

Lydia DeTello

SB387 Public Safety – Untraceable Firearms

Unfavorable

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My name is Lydia DeTello, I am an Executive Assistant, an artist, and a Marylander, born and raised. I have lived and worked in this state my entire life. I am currently registered as a Democrat, and I vote in ways that I believe will affect community change and protect the rights of working-class Marylanders. My priorities include social justice, limiting abuse of police power, racial equality, LGBT rights, and women's rights. I am also a firm believer in gun rights for all, and I am firmly against laws punishing victimless crimes. For those reasons I urge an unfavorable report of Senate Bill 387.

Bills like these criminalize otherwise innocent people. Over the past few years, gun ownership in Maryland has increased drastically. I myself know of people of various walks of life who have recently become gun owners, some I would not have expected to do so. I can tell you certainly that this is not a strictly partisan issue. I know of many people who lean staunchly left that support the right to gun ownership, and I know people in minority groups, who have chosen to arm themselves, some for the first time. For me, it is absolutely critical that citizens have the option to arm themselves as they feel necessary. For defense, as a hobby, for peace of mind, or simply to learn how to responsibly handle a firearm.

I would argue that there are people in this state who commit violent acts with guns especially in our great city of Baltimore. That is absolutely apparent and tragic. But this bill does absolutely nothing to put people in jail for violent crime, instead this bill targets your constituents who have chosen to arm themselves lawfully. For me personally, this bill is far more likely to put myself or my family in prison simply for owning an object. Not for using it inappropriately, but simply for possessing it. The same issue applies to any of your constituents who have chosen to arm themselves in this way. Not only does it punish for a victimless crime, it punishes heavy handedly, and indiscriminately. Three years and/or a fine of up to \$10,000 per firearm that is not in compliance with this rule is an obscenely cruel punishment for again, a completely non violent crime. In comparison, theft of a handgun is only 30 days in jail.

I wonder about the wasted efforts of creating this bill and mourn the potential. Why are we focusing again on policing working class Americans for owning something they have every right to own, throwing them in jail for possession, nothing else? We have plenty of Marylanders in jail, and by that I of course mean too many. Supposedly many representatives on both sides of the aisle wish to reduce crime. I can think of untold ways to do this, supporting communities, providing equal opportunities, raising

wages, supporting small business, etc. I would support and greatly appreciate efforts to improve any of these issues, however this bill does not focus on any of that. Instead it puts many constituents at risk of being imprisoned for ownership of an item. It puts people in jail indiscriminate of whether they have used a firearm in an inappropriate or violent way. It will throw your responsibly armed constituents in prison for 3 years and \$10,000 per firearm. I can't imagine how a punishment like this would ruin someone's life if they were prosecuted for owning just one item, let alone multiple.

To conclude, I believe this law is much more likely to fill our prisons with innocent people, potentially myself or my family, than it would be to address the actual real issue of violent crime. It will be enforced unfairly and most likely be used as a tool to police the working class. It penalizes responsible, gunowners of all walks of life.

For these reasons I strongly urge you to vote unfavorably on Senate Bill 387.

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