

February 7, 2022

## **WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF SCOTT G. DAVIS IN OPPOSITION TO HB 425**

I appreciate the opportunity to present my testimony in opposition to HB 425 to the members of this committee this afternoon.

If this bill becomes law then I am offered 2 ways to comply. One is to sell the 80 percent firearms(s) to a licensed FFL. The other is to get a licensed FFL to serialize an 80 percent receiver(s) by the beginning of the 2023 year. "Just put a serial number on it" is the phrase that I keep hearing from the same legislators time and time again. I want these legislators to know that I have contacted every FFL in the Washington County area, Frederick County Area, Allegany County area and the Garrett County area. I asked them if they would perform the engraving services for an 80 percent build or if they would purchase an 80 percent build. All FFL's answered with a hard "**NO**". This means that I am left with no way to comply except to destroy any 80 percent build that I may have.

There is a third option that is not listed in the bill. I live in a part of the state where I can drive 10 minutes North and live in Pennsylvania or I can drive 10 minutes South and live in West Virginia. I have chosen the latter option. I am taking my business, my family and tax dollars and I am moving to a state where lawmakers do not make criminals out of ordinary, law-abiding citizens because of one major city in the state that has a crime problem that is out of control.

The legislators of the MGA have forced me, a 51 year old lifetime resident of this state, to move to West Virginia where I no longer have to worry about anti-gun ideologues in the form of senators, representatives, attorney generals, mayors and out of state lobbyists that are bent on turning me into a criminal year, after year, after year. This is the third year that a ghost gun bill has come before the committee and it is the third time that I have had to take the time to tell everyone that I am not a criminal. ***We law abiding gun owners are tired of being the Maryland General Assembly's scapegoat for gun crime.*** The problem is not hobbyists.

After I move out of this state, I am still going to take the time each year to fight anti-gun agendas in the Maryland General Assembly, I am just doing it from a much safer place. I will always consider this home even though it has been invaded by other people outside of the state who craft legislation and come here to Maryland to tell us how they think we should live our lives. I am certainly tired of my tax dollars going to people that think I should be behind bars because I own a gun that I built myself.

How many innocent, law abiding lives does this panel find acceptable to ruin with stiff punishments, heavy fines and jail time by passing this bill? There are going to be far more law abiding people caught in this trap vs the virtually non-existent criminal activity that happens with these types of firearms. How many people can you statistically find that have used any of the types of guns that are outlined in this bill for criminal activity in the State of Maryland? I prefer that we focus on the severe crime problems that we already have instead of focusing on the anticipation of something that has not happened or very

rarely occurs. When the batter hits the ball to left field, the MGA goes to right field trying to find the ball. This bill is ineffective in many ways.

It does nothing to stop homicides and suicides. Criminals do not follow the law. Even if all guns were banned and confiscated in this state, it will not change the mentality of the people that are committing homicides.

*I quote the Democratic Chair in the House of Representatives as saying, "You can't just pass a bill and say, OK, crime is solved". – Baltimore Sun 2/21/2020*

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This is a very logical statement and I agree wholeheartedly. This statement was not in regards to this bill but this same reasoning applies to this bill, HB 425. We can't just pass this bill and say, OK crime is solved. I do not understand why we, as a whole, are not applying this same logic when it comes to lawful abiding gun owners that enjoy building our own firearms for lawful purposes. This is just another bill that punishes home gun builders by creating criminals out of law abiding citizens.

When is the MGA going to move the focus of our homicide and suicide issues to a "people problem" instead of a "gun problem?" Until the MGA starts to focus on what drives people to commit these crimes, address the issues and come up with common sense solutions, this homicide problem does not go away, it just gets worse. This had been proven over the past ten years. The Firearms Safety Act of 2013 was supposed to be the solution to our criminal use of firearms in this state. Instead, the problem has only become worse. Eyes have never been on the ball regarding this issue.

I have no problem throwing Baltimore under the bus regarding the drive for bills like this. If the MGA wants to use this city as the reason for making laws like this then I have no problem throwing it right back at you. Take care of the criminals that you already have instead of making *more* criminals out of law abiding people like me.

There is a stigma attached to "80 percent receivers", "AR rifles/pistols" and so called "ghost guns". These terms translate to "untraceable firearms" in the political arena. The mere mention of those words seem to conjure up fear, murder & crime in the minds of people that are not familiar with the hobby of building such guns. I assure you that all of law abiding citizens that partake in this hobby are not criminals. We are people that enjoy working with our hands, enjoy problem solving and enjoy reaping the benefits of our labor once a project is complete. There are many of us.

Building firearms has become one of my favorite hobbies over the years. I enjoy building firearms from un-serialized 80 percent receivers for my own personal use. AR style receivers are my firearms of choice, mainly for target shooting purposes. I have invested a lot of money in tooling and a lot of money into the firearms.

The price that it takes to make a home built gun is equivalent to, or more, than it costs to buy the same gun that is already built by a manufacturer. We already know that statistically our crime problem is overwhelmingly committed by criminals using stolen handguns. It makes no sense for a criminal to research and buy an 80 percent kit, researching which particular type of expensive tooling to buy,

purchasing all of the tooling and then learn how to build a firearm when they can simply buy a used, stolen gun for a small fraction of the price and without the hassles of researching, tooling and building.

**While the criminal closure rate remains very low in our state's high crime areas, law abiding gun owners and home builders tend to be the scapegoated group that takes the brunt of proposed legislation such as this bill.**

I request an unfavorable report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink. The name "SCOTT" is written in a stylized, cursive font. To its right, "DAVIS" is written in a similar style, with a large, sweeping flourish extending from the end of the word.

Scott G. Davis