

Sheriff



Sheriff Michael A. Lewis
Wicomico County Maryland

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House Bill 425 – Oppose

Public Safety- Untraceable Firearms

Letter of Opposition to the House Judiciary Committee

February 7, 2022

Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the House Committee, I submit this letter of opposition to House Bill 425 which would do nothing to stem the flow of violent crime, shootings and homicides in the State of Maryland, but would certainly further penalize and enslave lawful gun owners, at the hands of those who were elected to serve them.

HB 425 does nothing to address the untenable surge in homicides in Baltimore City, Prince George's County and Montgomery County, Maryland. Instead, this legislation targets lawful gun owners, gun collectors and unfortunately, our impoverished and poor communities where simple law-abiding citizens, unable to spend upwards of a \$1,000 on their weapon of choice, often resort to building their own gun (s) to protect themselves and their families from evil or harm.

As the Sheriff of Wicomico County, I will strongly support and advocate for meaningful legislation that would hold criminals accountable for crimes committed with a firearm, and that includes a "Ghost Gun." I will support common sense legislation such as the Violent Firearms Offender Act which calls for a minimum sentence and fine for crimes involving firearms as well as limiting pretrial release for suspects who have been convicted of previous crimes with firearms.

It's really that simple. What we need is accountability. What we need is truth in sentencing. I am charged with protecting one's Constitutional Rights. Currently, the single most important thing separating America from most of the world's other so-called free countries is our Second Amendment.

We don't need to wait another minute, let alone another hour, to take common sense steps to save the lives of Marylanders. However, further encroachment and infringement on one's Second Amendment Right to Bear Arms, including their right to purchase, receive or possess a homemade firearm is a step in the wrong direction, and certainly does absolutely nothing to address what really needs to occur to substantially impact violent crime in the great State of Maryland.

In the hands of a person determined to kill, any and all weapons, including a gun are devastating. The reality is that the world is an imperfect place, and there will always be bad people who use whatever weapons are available-guns, knives, fists, bats, poison, cars, rocks, bottles, etc., to attack their victims.

As a thirty-seven (37) Year veteran of law enforcement, 22 years as a Maryland State Trooper, and now 15 years as Sheriff of Wicomico County, I'll stand with each and every one of you, in passing meaningful legislation that would punish those criminals committing violent crimes with a firearm, eliminating "Soft on Crime" policies, and abolishing any further decriminalization of proven laws.

The passage of any legislation under the ruse of eliminating "Ghost Guns" or "Untraceable Firearms" in an effort to demonstrate to the public that you are getting tough on crime, is a slap in the face to an educated citizenry. The passage of this bill will do nothing to deter criminals from gun-trafficking or carrying out executions on the streets of Baltimore City or Prince George's County. Yes, we need to get tough on crime, and I'm willing to help you. But, this bill affects law-abiding citizens, plain and simple.

For these reasons, I urge to please issue an unfavorable report on HB 425.

Sincerely,

Michael A. Lewis
Sheriff