

SHANEKA HENSON
Legislative District 30A
Anne Arundel County

Appropriations Committee



The Maryland House of Delegates
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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Chair: Delegate Vanessa E. Atterbeary

Vice Chair: Delegate Alonzo T. Washington

Ways and Means, Room 131

House Office Building

Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Distinguished members of the Ways and Means Committee. For the record, I am Shaneka Henson, District 30A Delegate. Chairwoman Atterbeary and Vicechairman Washington, thank you for the opportunity to present HB30 "Election Law Polling Sites Firearms Prohibition" with the intent on securing your favorable vote.

This bill will simply prohibit people from bringing firearms within 100ft of polling sites during an election, excluding of course law enforcement officers or security guards on duty. There are currently ten other states with this law, Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Ohio, South Carolina, and Texas.

I submitted this bill last year for your review, and having not progressed past committee, I went back to work to make an even better bill addressing the concerns of those who testified unfavorably in the past. Specifically, you heard last year from the Maryland Shall Issue. They submitted a testimony in partial opposition and requested 2 amendments. In this year's bill, I have included the very exceptions they requested, an exception for firearms kept in the house of those who live within 100ft of a polling site, and an exception for those transporting firearms in their vehicle and driving within 100ft of a polling site. These exceptions are in line with the spirit of this bill, which is not about restricting gun ownership, only the intimidating effect of guns at polling sites.

Many of our polling sites are public properties where guns are already prohibited, but many more are private localities such as senior centers, churches, and private halls. Asking each locality to settle this question on their own will not only create confusion but potentially conflict between poll workers and voters. A clear state-wide prohibition will help support our poll-workers as they do their valuable work of ensuring a safe election.

Guns have no place at an election site. We've seen the limits of safety and security in elections get tested. HB30 will take a productive step to giving voters ease and confidence in their safety when exercising their democratic right to vote. For these reasons, I ask for your favorable vote.

Thank you,

Delegate Shaneka Henson

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shaneka Henson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "S" and a distinct "H".