

MARLON AMPREY
Legislative District 40
Baltimore City

DEPUTY MAJORITY WHIP

Economic Matters Committee



The Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 315
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3520 · 301-858-3520
800-492-7122 Ext. 3520
Marlon.Amprey@house.state.md.us

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 10, 2023

**Testimony of Delegate Marlon Amprey in support of HB 1028 Department of State Police –
Training Facilities With Firearm Range – Location**

Dear Chair Barve and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

It has been well-documented that living and working within earshot of gunfire can lead to an increased risk of negative mental and physical health outcomes such as anxiety, depression, and PTSD, as well as heart disease, diabetes, cancer, obesity, and asthma. When firearm ranges are located within earshot of hospitals, educational institutions, and correctional and juvenile facilities, the individuals working and living within them are forced to endure the trauma that results from this type of exposure.

Specifically, when a firearm range is located near an educational facility, students and faculty have been found to experience difficulty concentrating and an increase in fear and anxiety. Furthermore, studies have shown that indirect gun violence has a formative impact on children and adolescents, negatively impacting their academic performance and emotional development.^{1,2} Similarly, when a firearm range is located near a hospital, patients and healthcare workers may experience an increase in stress and anxiety. This not only increases their risk for negative mental and physical health outcomes, but can also interfere with a patient's healing process as well as a healthcare worker's performance. Although the noise from a nearby firearm range produces a significant negative impact on educational facilities and hospitals, the impact on correctional facilities is particularly dire because incarcerated individuals are more likely to have lived in communities with high gun violence rates. As a result, individuals who are incarcerated are at an even higher risk of experiencing negative mental and physical health outcomes from the noise exposure.

There are currently five correctional institutions in Maryland that are within earshot of training facilities with firearm ranges. These include Eastern Correctional Institution, North Branch Correctional Institution, Roxbury Correctional Institution, Dorsey Run Correctional Facility, and Central Maryland Correctional Facility. Due to their location, inmates, many of whom have previously experienced gun violence, are being re-traumatized from the sound of gunfire. This noise exposure not only increases their risk for negative mental and physical health outcomes, but also interferes with their rehabilitation process.

¹ Mitchell, K., Turner, H., Beseler, C., & Wade, R. (2019). Understanding the Impact of Seeing Gun Violence and Hearing Gunshots in Public Places: Findings From the Youth Firearm Risk and Safety Study. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 1-17.

² Panchal, N. (2022, October). *The Impact of Gun Violence on Children and Adolescents*. Retrieved from Kaiser Family Foundation: <https://www.kff.org/other/issue-brief/the-impact-of-gun-violence-on-children-and-adolescents/>

House Bill 1028 seeks to protect individuals working and living in hospitals, educational institutions, correctional facilities, and juvenile facilities from experiencing the trauma of hearing gunshots from a nearby firearm range while reducing the risk of triggering those who have been victims of gun violence. This bill aims to accomplish this goal by prohibiting the Department of State Police from locating a training facility with a firearm range near hospitals, correctional facilities, juvenile facilities, and educational facilities including daycare centers, public playgrounds, public and private schools, and colleges. Additionally, House Bill 1028 requires the Department to submit an annual report to the Governor and Maryland General Assembly beginning in 2023, which would include information on the number of Department owned or used training facilities with firearm ranges near hospitals, educational facilities, correctional facilities, or juvenile facilities. The report would also include details regarding the costs associated with relocating or replacing any of these identified training facilities, the trauma and outcomes resulting from facilities being located in close proximity to firearm ranges, data on the gunshot decibel and distance thresholds for physical and mental health and safety, and the feasibility of temporarily relocating firearm range training to Greenbury Point at the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis.

An amendment for this bill was submitted, which shifts the responsibility from the Department of State Police to the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services. Additionally, the amendment limits the scope of the bill to only apply to outdoor firearm ranges. Lastly, the amendment mandates the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services to notify hospitals, educational facilities, correctional facilities, and juvenile facilities located within earshot of a firearm range at least 24 hours before conducting firearm training.

While House Bill 1028 will not reduce the gun violence epidemic that plagues Maryland, it will promote the safety and well-being of Maryland residents by preventing unnecessary trauma due to gunshot noise exposure and provide data that will aid in future decision making regarding the location of training facilities with firearm ranges.

For these reasons, I urge a favorable report on House Bill 1028.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marlon Amprey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "M" and "A".

Delegate Marlon Amprey
40th Legislative District of Maryland