

I am writing in opposition to SB1 and the immediate harm it poses to myself and Marylanders more generally. The changes proposed pose an immediate threat to the very populations that the general assembly recognized had a "good and substantial reason" to carry a firearm when that was the standard.

Individuals like myself who hold Top Secret clearances are regularly at risk because of our access to materials that protect our nation's security. The ability to carry firearms when out and about gives us necessary protection from those who intend to kidnap, ransom, or interrogate cleared individuals in their efforts to steal America's secrets and threaten our nation's security. These threats take many forms including foreign and domestic terrorist organizations and these threats are, by their nature, not predictable, so constant protection on one's person is necessary. Countless other Marylanders hold these same security clearances and will be in constant risk of danger without protection under this bill not to mention the safety of the country as a whole.

Other than protecting myself, members of my immediate family have faced regular threats and harassment while in public. My little sister has been stalked and harassed by strange men for the past 2 years. It has been bad enough that she withdrew from school to avoid these men. My fiance works in the middle of the night in downtown Baltimore and has been harassed and intimidated by strangers as well. Young women across our state face similar threats and they would prefer their safety remain in their own hands rather than face the disarmament SB1 would subject them to.

It is also worth mentioning the women and men across Maryland with restraining orders against abusers who have already relied on a firearm for protection while out in public for years. Many of these people have already been attacked by people who know their address and times they leave the house. Presently they can be just as safe in both locations. SB1 would ensure these people disarm themselves before leaving their homes creating the perfect opportunity for those who wish to do them harm to strike.

For those trying to carry legally under SB1, they would regularly be forced to leave firearms in their vehicles as they go to locations which do not allow carry. These unattended firearms would pose a major theft risk and then are likely to be turned on innocent members of the public.

SB1 is an overreaction to an imagined threat. Private citizens have had carry permits in our state for decades and time and time again we have seen that the individuals who pose a violent risk to our safety are not the same people who are willing to send their photo and fingerprints to the state police and pay fees and wait months for approval before carrying. The process already in place is more than sufficient. It is already illegal to carry without a permit and in sensitive places like schools and court houses. If this bill passes, countless people across our state will be in immediate, unavoidable danger the moment they leave their homes. SB1 would be a terrible threat to our state and I strongly recommend your opposition to it.