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Testimony on SB0001: Gun Safety Act of 2023

I am a 72 year old widow that, until the last couple of years, was against owning and having a handgun in my home, much less carry a firearm. I live in Baltimore City, just at the county line, and share a home with my daughter, son-in-law, and four of my five grandchildren. I have the inlaw suite in the home. My home is the only home on a dead end street, next to a cemetery. I changed my mind given what happened with the pandemic, then at the Capitol Building on January 6, 2021, as well as the increasing violence and crime in Baltimore. I also changed my mind about owning a handgun after an incident involving my daughter.

In April of 2022, less than a week after I did my Handgun Qualification License (HQL) class, my 33 year old daughter was carjacked and assaulted at gunpoint by a man that was a convicted felon on parole for a similar crime. Her attacker is currently in detention, awaiting trial for the carjacking and assault, as well as violation of parole. The incident left my daughter with PTSD. I thank the Lord daily that it wasn't worse, that she is alive. She could no longer drive the van without having flashbacks. We actually got rid of the van because of the carjacking and her response to it via the PTSD. The damage to the van was in excess of 5000 dollars. The van was worth way more. My daughter's life is priceless.

I have mobility problems due to health issues. I use a mobility scooter when shopping and often carry it on a motorized lift on the back of my car. Due to the crime issues in the city I live in, I no longer shop or attend events in the city. All my business and entertainment is in the surrounding suburbs. I wish I could attend Ravens and Orioles games, but the violence, and the "squeegie kids" in the downtown areas stop me from doing so. It should be noted that Mayor Scott's plan to alter the places that these squeegie kids can ply their trade, failed as there are videos of them approaching cars in some of the six forbidden areas after January 10, when the plan went into effect. The violence also stops me from going to the Inner Harbor for things such as the Aquarium, and the Maryland Science Center. I loved going to Fells Point, but no longer do so as there have been problems there too in the last couple of years. Then, the same day that Mr. Reynolds was murdered near the Inner Harbor, Governor Hogan declared that Maryland would be a shall issue state, following the recent Supreme Court decision regarding New York's gun laws and the lawsuit that was against the law restricting carry. I signed up for the Wear and Carry class at my local gun range. I received my Handgun Permit in November.

From what I have seen or read about in the news, many of the handgun crimes are committed by those under the age of 21. And the crimes are beginning to spill over to the area where I live. Disagreements often result in violence to solve the disagreement or revenge for a perceived slight. To so severely restrict where I can carry would negate the value of my carry permit. That value is the right to defend myself in public, with equal force. I have and continue to train in less lethal forms of self defense. I have taken taser training, and am looking at home invasion survival and carjack survival training at my local gun range. I also am looking at more advanced training at my local gun range as time and finances permit. This training includes practical concealed carry course. I also attend a monthly women's meeting at my local gun range to further my knowledge of handgun operation and use as a means of self defense.

This legislation, similar in nature to what was passed in Montgomery, would so severely limit carrying a handgun to the point that it could also seriously limit transporting a handgun as does the law in