

My name is Rodney Cobb, I am a lifelong voting Democrat, healthcare worker, husband and father to three sons. I am writing to speak against SB001 which will severely restrict Maryland residents who have obtained their wear and carry permits from the Maryland State Police. In Maryland we have allowed criminals to dictate policy regarding the regulation of firearms. We have combined our fight against illegal gun violence in our state and legal gun ownership into the same fight. I contend that we can fight against illegal gun violence and protect legal gun owners simultaneously. Gun violence is the enemy of us all and we are not on separate ends of the spectrum on this subject. Myself like many Marylanders support legislation directed at reducing gun violence, but this bill is not directed towards the criminal element. The target of this bill is squarely directed toward law abiding citizens who only want a peaceful community and will have no impact on the criminals who are the perpetrators of gun violence. For decades Maryland restricted wear and carry permits to business owners and the politically well connected, yet we still had an epidemic of gun violence. Further proof that restricting Marylanders from carrying firearms has no impact on gun violence. Law abiding citizens who choose to legally carry a firearm should have some restrictions as I concede this right is not absolute, but this bill essentially eliminates your ability to defend yourself nearly anyplace that you could possibly encounter the criminal element.

In 2013 the General Assembly passed the Firearms Safety Act. It was sold to us as a way to reduce gun violence. In the near decade since this legislation was passed, Maryland has only grown more dangerous. Gun violence and gun crimes have only increased. We can't legislate our way out of the epidemic of gun violence. Marylanders deserve to have the ability to defend ourselves against what is seemingly and daily barrage of gun violence. The police can't be omnipresent, so the responsibility falls on each of us to defend ourselves when possible against the criminal element.

Lastly in the Maryland General Assembly handbook issued to all state legislators under the Federal limitations section, it clearly says the state is specially prohibited from passing certain laws. They may not enact laws that impair the freedoms guaranteed in the Bill of Rights. Until recently what the Second amendment guaranteed was ambiguous and up for debate, but the US Supreme court recently clarified its position on the matter. In the 2022 Bruen v NY Rifle and Pistol association that went before the US Supreme Court, the court clarified that self defense is covered under the Second amendment. The majority opinion wrote that "respondents argument would in effect exempt cities from the Second Amendment and would eviscerate the general right to publicly carry firearms for self-defense". The decision goes on to say that "expanding the category of sensitive places to simply to all places of public congregation defines the category of sensitive places far to broadly". The current SB001 bill does exactly what the US Supreme Court says was unconstitutional. This decision is now the law of the land, and it is quite reprehensible that this General Assembly would attempt to craft legislation that not only defies the letter of the law but also the spirited intent of the law. Your own rules prohibit this piece of legislation from moving forward.

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