

Dear Delegates,

Thank you for providing this opportunity for me to express my opposition to SB1. As a law-abiding citizen who is employed in the field of Financial Compliance (hence, I have an understanding of how legislation affects the day to day operations of citizens), I believe this bill would do nothing to deter the actions of violent criminals. It would serve only to decimate the rights of law-abiding citizens to protect themselves and their families from violent criminals. Law-abiding citizens must already attend 20 hours of training, pass a shooting qualification (demonstrating safe-handling and proficiency with a handgun), submit fingerprints to the Maryland State Police for a full background check, and certify (under penalty of perjury) that they are eligible under current state law to own a firearm. These are not the citizens who are committing violent crimes.

Violent crime occurs in every location that SB1 would prohibit the legal wear/carry of a handgun for personal protection. This bill would restrict a citizen's ability to defend themselves with a firearm to their home, or another home where they have received permission to carry their firearm. The bill would essentially condemn citizens to face armed criminals with their hands. It would sentence citizens to enduring grave bodily harm. Even to death.

I choose to believe that it is not your goal to endanger your law-abiding citizens. I choose to believe that your intention is to try and reduce crime by passing legislation. Unfortunately, the definition of a "criminal" is "someone who doesn't obey the law." These laws will not deter violent criminals from using firearms. They will only stop law-abiding citizens from having the ability to defend themselves with the same force that violent criminals are using to inflict violence and terror on civilians.

I have experienced two situations where I could only wish that I was allowed to have a firearm on my person. The first was at my workplace. There was an accidental triggering of the "Active Shooter Alert." All associates (~3,000 people) were notified on their computer screens that there was an "active shooter" on our campus and that it was not a drill. We were instructed not to try and leave the building, but to hide in conference rooms or offices (which have see-through glass walls). I watched as associates hid under their desks, crying and trying to call their families to say that they may never see them again. Our building has unarmed security guards. I felt a sense of complete helplessness wash over me as I clutched my two, glass "coach of the quarter" awards that I intended to throw at the shooter if they came onto my floor of the building. After a terrifying 30 minutes, we were informed that there was no active shooter and the alert was triggered by accident. The second incident was at the church that my family attends. During a time of prayer, where the Minister's eyes were closed, a tall man wearing sunglasses and a trench coat with the insignia of a motorcycle gang walked slowly to the front of the church. There had been no alter-call and there was no reason for anyone to walk to the front. He became agitated and began flailing his arms when the minister failed to notice him. I looked towards the off-duty police officer who was working armed security for the church. He was staring down at his phone. He hadn't even noticed what was transpiring. As I stood there, defenseless and praying that the man did not begin a violent attack, I realized that if the man were to turn produce a weapon, he would have been able to harm or end a lot of lives before the officer would have been able drop his phone, unholster his firearm find a safe location to return fire and stop the threat. Were the man to have produced a weapon, a legally armed parishioner who was facing the man would have been in a much more advantageous position (close to the front of the church, with no innocent bystanders in the way) to stop the threat without harming innocent people. Thankfully, two of the church elders approached the man and led him to another area of the church to offer him counsel and aid. It turned out the man was drunk and distressed, but not intent on attacking anyone.

I am grateful that neither of these instances required me to use force to defend my life and the lives of my family or my work and church families. As a Wear & Carry permit holder, I have no

desire or interest in ever having to draw my firearm. However, both of those situations served to teach me. They taught me that the only person who is immediately capable of countering a violent criminal who is using a firearm is the individual who is there and is able to use the same force that the criminal has chosen to use.

My final concern with this bill is that it will destroy the ability of women to have access to life-saving force. As a firearms instructor, I frequently encounter biological female students who express that they live in some form of fear at all times. Many of them are significantly smaller than most males. They live in fear that with only their larger size, higher bone density and higher muscle mass, a predatory male (with or without a firearm) could inflict severe bodily harm or even death on them. My wife is one such small woman who is living with stage 4 breast cancer. She has indicated that she wants to obtain her Wear & Carry permit because she lives with persistent fear of being attacked, raped, abducted or killed by a predatory male. She does not like firearms and wants nothing to do with them, however, even though I have my Wear & Carry permit, she knows that I cannot be physically present with her at all times. I have a full time job that requires me to be in the office several days of the week. She knows that if she is attacked, she does not have the physical strength to fend off even a small male. She needs a force multiplier to increase her chances of escaping such an attack. SB1 would leave her nearly defenseless as she tries to go about her day.

Please don't force your citizens to become helpless victims of violent crime. Law-abiding citizens who have gone through the training and background checks to obtain their Wear & Carry permits are not the people who are committing crimes. In the classes that I have taught, no student has ever expressed a desire to use their firearm for anything other than going to the range, hunting or competitive shooting events. They certainly do not want to every have to use them for self defense. They only want to protect themselves, their families and other innocent by-standers if confronted by a criminal with a firearm. Please do the right thing and reject SB1. Please focus your efforts on legislation that will keep violent criminals off the streets and will add additional penalties to anyone who uses a firearm in a criminal manner.

Thank you for hearing my testimony.
Best Regards,

Nathaniel Lohrmann