

To Whom it May Concern:

I am Russell J Bohart, citizen of Baltimore County Maryland, and I am opposed to Senate Bill 1. It prevents me from exercising my right to protect and defend myself and my family. At the same time, it does not protect anyone else who chooses not to carry means to protect and defend themselves. This law only stands to make a law-abiding citizen a criminal, not because of any action against anyone else, but by exercising their right to defend themselves. We have data showing increases in mass shootings and the patterns they use. If enacted, this law would be in favor of the mass shooter.

The reason that I carry is so that I would be able to defend myself and my loved ones in places that are unsecured and provide exactly what a mass shooter needs to carry out his crime. FBI Statistics show that between 2017 and 2021, the number of mass shooting incidents has doubled from 31 to 61 in those years respectively. Data on past mass shootings show a pattern that the shooter plans for easy access, confinement of a large number of potential victims and time. Most of the places of public accommodation in this bill provide easy access, confinement, and a large number of potential victims. With this law enacted, mass shooters will know that those places must be gun free with no other means of security. This equals easier access and more time as there will be no resistance show to their use of force.

What is the purpose of this law? I don't see where it provides safety for the public nor any individual. It seems to assume that if it is illegal to carry a firearm into a public place, then mass shootings will stop. But the mass shooter by default doesn't care about the law. If he did, he wouldn't commit mass murder.

The crimes we see committed in the news are not by people who are legal concealed carry permit holders. Some are legal gun owners, but they have not been registered to carry their firearms. They certainly didn't need a carry permit to commit their heinous crime, nor would they care if there is a law in place preventing them from carrying into the locations where they killed so many. Once they have decided they are willing to commit a crime that brings a penalty of life in prison, it makes no sense they will care about a law that brings with it a significantly smaller penalty.

With the recent changes increasing carry permits, many have said that there will be more crimes of passion because the gun is already there. But the issues we have today are not crimes of passion. They are premeditated plans by a deranged person who wants to do as much harm to as many people as they can.

I would argue that we will not see crimes of passion amongst permit holders as we have a system that checks both criminal background and likelihood to commit violent crime in our application process. Maryland is one of the few states in the nation that puts so much effort into understanding what kind of person is applying for the permit. Many states require a quick background check, \$50 and that's it.

Last year that was over 90,000 HGP applications for permit according to Maryland State Police. A majority of those were issued. This is over 10 times prior years. In this past year, we have not heard of one HGP holder who has committed a crime with their firearm. I am unaware of any permit holder who has committed a crime with their firearm in recent times.

I believe that there is a problem with shootings in our society and in our state. I believe that we need a solution. I believe that whether we take guns away from law abiding citizens or make laws restricting where they carry, the criminal minded will always have guns and will always carry them wherever they please.

Please do not put legal gun owners and permit holders at a disadvantage.