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Dear Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

My name is Kimberly Tipton. I strongly oppose SB0001.

I operate a small personal care business in Anne Arundel County. My business is located in a very small strip of stores along a busy highway with a public transportation bus stop on the nearby corner. The nature of my business requires me to provide services until very late in the evening, after the few other business located within the strip are closed. I am most times leaving alone and the parking lot is vacant. 10 or 11pm is not uncommon for me to be finishing up. I have on several occasions witnessed various different vehicles pulling into the lot with multiple individuals occupying the vehicle. On a few occasions, a vehicle has pulled directly in front of my business as I turned off the lights to lock up, just sitting and watching. During those circumstances, I facetime with my husband until they leave. On one particular occasion, a vehicle with multiple male occupants pulled next to my car, which was the lone vehicle on the lot at the far end of the strip furthest from my business. I watched for a moment and when the driver saw me, he pulled the vehicle around directly in front of my door and sat and watched until finally leaving.

Until September 2022, My business and another business were the only two business operation within the strip. The other storefronts were vacant. One of the occupants operates a business that sells paraphernalia that is known to be used for drug use.

We constantly have people banging and pulling on our door, which we keep locked whenever anyone is working alone or after dark. They are usually asking to use the restroom (even though we have posted no public restroom), a cigarette lighter or directions. It is not uncommon to have people "sleeping" in there vehicles on our parking lot or just drive through.

All of this suspicious activity, the ever increasing violent criminal activity in our area and the fact that I am many times alone late into the evening renders me feeling extremely uneasy and unsafe.

I am a 63 year old female with physical limitations rendering me pretty much defenseless against any potential attacker.

I have been the victim of domestic abuse in 1993 by an intoxicated partner which resulted in an ambulance ride to what was then known as North Arundel Hospital. I was lucky to come away with a broken rib and a few stitches in my face because it could have ended so much worse. My 10 year old son witnessed the occurrence.

I use to be petrified of guns. My son took me to the range after returning from military basic training. He taught me how to properly and safely handle the firearm and how to shoot it. He reminded me of the incident when I was the victim of abuse.

After that first day at the range, I signed up for some formal training with a certified instructor and purchased my first handgun. That was in 2012. I have since taken the required training, passed the NICS background check and obtained my Maryland concealed carry permit. I continue to train regularly. Does that 100 percent ensure my safety? Absolutely it does not...but it at least gives me a better chance should I find myself in a situation where my life is endangered.

Prior to the recent change in Maryland becoming a "Shall Issue" state, a business owner could, after fulfilling the requirements of "Good and Substantial" , obtain a Maryland concealed carry permit. If SB0001 is passed into law, ALL permit holders lose the ability to defend their life should they fall victim of the ever increasing violent crime. We will no longer be able to carry even to and from our businesses since many are in leased spaces with other businesses located within the 100 yards.

The vast majority of violent crime with a handgun is committed by someone unlawfully possessing and/or carrying a gun. THAT is where the Maryland judicial system needs to focus their attention. Enforce the laws already written and tighten up the penalties for illegal gun AND drug activity. Going after legal gun owners and permit holders is not going to do anything at all to solve the current crisis happening across our state.

Respectfully,

Kimberly Tipton