

I am writing to express my strong opposition to SB 1 & HB 824. As a licensed and legal firearms owner in Rockville, Maryland, I believe that it is unfair and unjust for my legal rights to be restricted, making me a criminal for carrying my legally owned firearm.

I am a Latino man, a father, homeowner, taxpayer, and highly educated. I have fulfilled all the necessary legal and statutory requirements to obtain and carry my legally owned firearm. Data at both the national and state levels demonstrate that Black and Latino people are at a greater risk of experiencing aggressive law enforcement and disproportionate punishments compared to their white counterparts in Maryland. If the enforcement strategies employed for this legislation follow the same patterns of racial and ethnic disparities seen in the past, it is conceivable that Black and Latino individuals who carry firearms outside of their homes could face more intense enforcement and more severe punishments compared to their white counterparts. SB1 has the potential to exacerbate racial and ethnic disparities in Maryland, while not making communities safer.

I live in Montgomery County, where recent reports show that various types of crimes have significantly increased, particularly violent crime. Furthermore, assaults, robberies, and sex offenses are also on the rise. As a minority, I want to have the ability to defend myself and my loved ones in the face of danger. However, SB 1 & HB 824 would infringe on my right to self-defense and put other minorities, such as Blacks and Latinos, at a higher risk of gun violence.

As a private citizen, I do not have the privilege of having 24/7 security for myself or my family, unlike those in positions of authority. Every minute that I must wait for police assistance puts my life and the lives of my loved ones in the hands of criminals. However, SB 1 would make it a crime for me, a legal and licensed firearms owner, to carry my firearm outside my home, while actual criminals would not be impacted by these bills because they simply do not obey the law.

While these bills may be aimed at saving lives, however, they put more innocent lives at risk by denying law-abiding citizens the opportunity to defend themselves. The Second Amendment of the US Constitution, which I have sworn to protect, guarantees my right to protect my life and the lives of my loved ones inside and outside my home.

In my opinion, Maryland should consider becoming a permitless carry or constitutional carry state. This concept has been gaining popularity in recent years, with a growing number of states adopting permitless carry laws. Permitless carry promotes public safety. By allowing law-abiding citizens to carry firearms without a permit, potential criminals are deterred from committing crimes, as they are aware that their intended victims may be armed and able to defend themselves. This has been shown to be effective in reducing crime rates in states that have adopted permitless carry laws.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge an unfavorable report on SB1 and HB 824.

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