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Maryland General Assembly
Written Testimony Submitted Electronically

<div align="center">Re: Senate Bill 1 (SB1)</div>

Dear Members of the Legislature,

Please accept this as my written testimony on Senate Bill 1 (SB1) which is due to be heard in the House Judiciary Committee on March 29, 2023. I am generally against the bill, but I am most vigorously against the current prohibition on any place licensed to serve alcohol. That is a prohibition that is way too broad and would make me an inadvertent criminal.

Generally: I am a legal gun owner with a carry permit I intend to use to protect myself and my family in this increasingly crazy and violent world. I am also a practicing attorney.

You cannot legislate away the amount of hate and division in our society right now. Our state (and the world) has become increasingly unsafe over the years. It is caused by forces much larger than those that can be controlled by the Maryland General Assembly. Whatever the cause, I feel that I cannot count on my fellow citizens to act rationally when life's inevitable conflicts arise. People get unreasonably violent for the smallest of reasons these days. Our entire society seems to be permanently angry about something at all times. It is scary to go anywhere.

Therefore, I want the right to carry a firearm for personal defense when and if I feel it is necessary. I am not a criminal. I should have the right to protect myself from criminals.

I am very worried that the legislature wants to make me a criminal by playing a game of "gotcha" if I carry my firearm into one of the several places you have deemed off limits. Many of these places are exactly the types of places where I will feel unsafe. They are places where people tend to gather. I can easily see myself wearing my firearm into one of these locations inadvertently – and suddenly I am the criminal. That is unfair to me.

You should trust that regular citizens who go through the permitting classes and passed the required background checks will do the right thing. You should not seek to aim the criminal law at them simply because they carried into the place that you deem wrong. We are not the criminals and should not be treated as such by our lawmakers.

(As an aside, you have missed a wonderful chance to make the carry permit classes more robust – heavily focusing on specific safety practices, and teaching conflict avoidance and resolution. You could have come up with a curriculum and been a model for carry permit classes across the country. But that is for another time as that is not what this bill covers.)

While I am against changing the current law at all, I am aware that some version of this bill will pass the legislature and become law. Therefore, I will be realistic and focus on the specific provisions I would like to see the Committee change.

Special Purpose Areas: I ask the Committee to amend the bill to take out the prohibitions on "special purpose areas" which include many places that I might want to legally carry my firearm. The bill seems to argue that places where people gather should be off limits. Those are exactly the types of places I might want to legally defend myself.

Bars & Restaurants: This is my number 1 request of the Committee. Please amend the bill so it does not prohibit carry in all establishments that serve alcohol. That is a VERY broad list. I should not suddenly be a criminal by walking into a restaurant that happens to serve beer or wine, or by walking into a hotel that has a bar.

I agree with the amendment that was proposed by Senator Folden that prohibited my carry if I am the one drinking alcohol. That is reasonable. You could also limit the prohibition to those places that predominantly serve alcohol – bars. That would also be reasonable. But the way it is worded now is too broad. Please strike this provision from the current bill.

Thank you for your time and attention. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Tucker Clagett