

3/27/23

RE: SB 1 - UNFAVORABLE

Dear Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

Thank you for taking the time to read this. I am writing as OPPOSED to Senate Bill 1.

As a wear & carry permit holder and a MD Qualified [Firearms] Instructor, this bill strikes at the heart of law abiding citizens to defend themselves against violent criminals. Laws to restrict law-abiding citizens will not reduce crime and there is no data to support this assertion by Senator Waldstreicher and this bill's sponsors. When questioned about the data, the mantra is "more guns equals more crime" without substantive data to support this belief. The burden of proof is on the sponsors yet this data hasn't been provided. There IS evidence to support that more law-abiding citizens legally carrying firearms do restrict crime and do stop criminals.

Creating these additional sensitive areas will have unintended consequences. You will be creating new "soft" targets for violent criminals to attack. And when they do attack, there will be no armed citizen response. Consider the Luby's Cafeteria massacre in Killeen TX on October 16, 1991. Dr. Suzanna Gratia was a legally concealed permit holder, yet when a truck smashed through the glass of the restaurant and a man started shooting, she reached for her gun that she used to carry in her purse. However, she had decided to start leaving it in her vehicle a few months earlier over concerns for having her chiropractic license stripped. She would have had the opportunity to stop this mass murder, but instead 23 innocent people died that day including both of her parents (Surviving a Mass Killer Rampage: When Seconds Count, Police are Minutes Away, pages 227-231).

Another unintended consequence is that these sensitive areas will mean more guns in cars. Which, according to Senator Waldstreicher, is how legal guns get into the hands of criminals! So, you will be creating more opportunities for gun theft by passing this flawed bill. Another unintended consequence because handgun permit holders will have to leave their guns in their vehicles much more often. The safest place for a gun to be in public is concealed on the hip of a handgun permit holder, not left in a car even if under lock and key.

Does this bill also require metal detectors be installed and armed guards be posted at each of these sensitive areas? If not, please answer – who will stop the criminals from entering these spaces with firearms?

Senate President Bill Ferguson has said the question is "At the end of the day this bill is about less guns. Do we want to be a society where everyone needs to be armed to the hilt to feel safe, or do we want to create a society where people don't need guns to feel safe." Notice he said less guns, not less crime.

CALL TO ACTION

Let's be tough on criminals and punishing criminals, rather than punishing law-abiding citizens by infringing on our self-evident and constitutionally protected rights. Instead of cracking down on "gun violence" (guns aren't pulling their own triggers -- the criminals are the individuals guilty of violence) please focus on cracking down on the criminals. SB-1 will not stop any criminals from carrying guns on "sensitive places" but will just strip law-abiding citizens of our right to protect ourselves. SB-1 will for all intents and purposes nullify the MSP issued handgun carry permit. This must stop here.

Please support our US and Maryland Constitution and Declaration of Rights.

MARYLAND DECLARATION OF RIGHTS

Art. 2. The Constitution of the United States, and the Laws made, or which shall be made, in pursuance thereof, and all Treaties made, or which shall be made, under the authority of the United States, are, and shall be the Supreme Law of the State; and the Judges of this State, and all the People of this State, are, and shall be bound thereby; anything in the Constitution or Law of this State to the contrary notwithstanding.

Art. 44. That the provisions of the Constitution of the United States, and of this State, apply, as well in time of war, as in time of peace; and any departure therefrom, or violation thereof, under the plea of necessity, or any other plea, is subversive of good Government, and tends to anarchy and despotism.

Senator Waldstreicher has proclaimed himself a "1st Amendment absolutist" I would encourage him and you to not pick and choose what part of the Constitution to support, but rather support all the rights and responsibilities afforded to us by the United States Constitution and the MD Declaration of Rights by withdrawing this bill immediately.

Respectfully submitted,
Mike Thomas

District 35