

SB1 - UNFAVORABLE

Good day Committee Chairman and Committee Members. My name is Crystal Jones, I am Carroll County resident. I am providing written testimony today regarding SB0001 and my strong **OPPOSITION** toward this bill.

With regards to this bill, I have three primary areas of concern that I would like to address with you today.

1. The assumption that this bill will alleviate violent crimes and/or mass shootings
2. The mental health legislation lacking in this bill
3. The removal of personal protection from law abiding citizens

During the initial reading of this bill there were several testimonies given citing how this bill would increase safety because it would limit the places where carrying a firearm would be legal. Several references were made to the amount of wear and carry permits that were approved since the New York State Rifle & Pistol Association, Inc. v. Bruen. Supreme Court case. During that reading it was said that 80,000 wear and carry permits have been approved since July of 2022 with the implication that this is an extremely large number. However, when you take into consideration the population of Maryland residents old enough to apply for a wear and carry permit (3,642,741), 80,000 permits equate out to only 2.2% of the population. This is an extremely small number when one considers the fact that the report on Crime Firearms Study from Senate Bill 622/chapter 335 in 2019 found that 80% of the 2,772 gun crime cases were committed by persons prohibited from possessing a firearm. Furthermore, arguments were made referencing a case in July 2022 in Texas where a concealed carry holder accidentally shot and killed a 9-year-old girl when attempting to fend off an armed robber threatening him and his wife at an ATM. This is absolutely a tragic case; however, it is not the only case involving a legal concealed carry holder last summer. During that same timeframe, 22-year-old Elisjscha Dicken (a legal concealed carry permit holder) saved potentially hundreds of people by stopping an armed assailant who opened fire in a shopping mall in Indiana. My intention in sharing these statistics and stories with you today is to remind you that restricting the rights of law-abiding citizens is not going to decrease the amount of violence in our communities. It is only going to restrict those law-abiding citizens from being able to protect themselves and their families from the illegal gun owners committing these heinous crimes.

Next, I would like to address the lack of mental health legislation in this bill. The goal of this bill appears to be to reduce the amount of violence and decrease the mass shootings that are on the rise within our country. In order to achieve this, it is my belief that we need to shift the focus away from gun control, and instead focus on mental health. The Violence Project has found that 80% of mass public shooters were in noticeable crisis prior to their crimes and 40% of those people were in that crisis for years leading up to the crime. They also established that “most mass shooters exhibited between one and four crisis signs. However, over a third of shooters showed five or more crisis signs.” Statistics like these are not going to be remedied by limiting where legal wear and carry permit holders can carry or by increasing training and application requirements. These statistics are only going to change (ultimately reducing our mass shootings) by addressing the root of the problem, mental health. Working to provide

adequate mental health coverage and accessibility to all citizens regardless of their age, color, gender, or financial status. Investing in programs like Moonshot and Google Jigsaw to begin to utilize today's technology for good rather than continuing to perpetuate the hate that it's currently being used to spread.

Finally, I would like to address how this bill is stripping Maryland citizens of their ability to protect themselves and their families. I am a 4'11" 120lb female. To say that I could be easily overpowered by a person of average height and weight is an extreme understatement. With the increase in violent crimes both within the state of Maryland and throughout the country over the last 5 years I have felt my sense of safety and security slipping away. It was this sense of insecurity and fear that pushed me to obtain my wear and carry permit. Since obtaining that permit, I have participated in over 100 hours of firearm training either as a student myself or as an instructor (with Project Appleseed). I also carry pepper spray on me whenever I am out (with or without my firearm) and am registered for women's self-defense classes throughout this upcoming year. I fully recognize the responsibility that comes carrying a firearm and the trauma that could come should I ever be in a predicament where my only option is to use that firearm. However, I firmly believe that the trauma that my death, rape, or other horrific crime would cause to not only me, but also my husband, and my extended family is much greater. Therefore, I choose to protect myself in every way possible and for me part of that tool kit is my wear and carry permit. Should this bill be passed into law, it would be stripping me, and thousands of other women just like me, of our ability to protect ourselves and our families.

In closing, I would first like to thank you Committee Chairman and Committee Members, for your dedication and sacrifice to serve in these roles and for hearing/reading our testimonies. You have been awarded great power within our incredible state and it is my sincere hope that you use it in ways that will further promote the views and values of your constituents. In this vain, I urge you, to please vote **AGAINST** SB0001 in order to preserve the protection of our citizens.

References:

[Maryland population by year, county, race, & more | USAFacts](#)

[SB 622/Ch. 335, 2019; GOCPYVS; Report on Crime Firearms Study \(MSAR #12198\) \(maryland.gov\)](#)

[No indictment in shooting death of girl during ATM robbery | AP News](#)

[Armed 'hero' stopped mass shooter at Indiana mall - BBC News](#)

[Key Findings - Comprehensive Mass Shooter Data - The Violence Project](#)

[Home - Moonshot \(moonshotteam.com\)](#)

[Jigsaw \(google.com\)](#)