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Senate Bill 1
Position : OPOSE

The position of SB1 assumes all firearm owners, resident or non-resident in Maryland are criminally minded/motivated. There is currently no data to support lawfully owned and possessed firearms within the proposed restricted areas mentioned in SB1 cause any threat to public safety.

This statement is backed up by the years of this practice taking place by hundreds of thousands of hunters since the inception of the state of Maryland when they bring firearms to town to get supplies, food, fuel, or lodging for their hunting trips. This statement is also backed up by the numerous wear and carry permit holders in the state of Maryland exercising their right for self defense by carrying their firearms into all the areas SB1 would restrict and doing so without committing crimes with those firearms.

The hunting industry in Maryland as reported by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources 2018-2019 annual deer report is a 400 million dollar industry. This industry is from purchasing fuel to and from hunting trips, purchasing food to and from hunting trips, firearms and ammunition purchases, purchasing supplies to and from hunting trips, lodging for extended trips (especially for the extensive number of out of state hunters), and all this happens while they have firearms in their vehicles and happens without incident. When hunting season starts is there an uptick in armed robbery or other firearms related crime by hunters in the areas SB1 is looking to restrict? The answer is no there is not.

What about competitive shooters in the state and the out of state competitors? Under the conditions of SB1 they would be prohibited from stopping for fuel on their way to an even or picking up food or other supplies. Non residents wouldn't even be allowed to compete as SB1 would prohibit them from staying in any hotel or other lodging facility.

Beyond the strong infringements on our constitutions second amendment, SB1 would render every citizen under violent attack defenseless and at the mercy of their assailant(s) and the time it takes for law enforcement to respond to the scene. SB1 effectively removes their greatest tool for self defense.

This bill presents itself as a stick both hands in the cookie jar and see how much you can pull out attempt and gun control rather than public safety. Since the Supreme Court ruling last summer that ended Marylands "good and substantial" reason for issuing wear and carry permits there has been a dramatic increase in permit application and issued permits. The increase actually as noted by the Maryland State Police (MSP) started in 2020 as the increase in permit applications went from 53,736 in 2019 to 104,456 in 2020. Well before the Bruen case in June of 2022. This is telling the state of Maryland the citizens of this state are interested in their safety and they feel there is a need to be armed as they go about their daily lives. After the Bruen decision the permit applications rose slightly from the 2020 number of 104,456 to 118,262 in 2022. In 2020 of the 104,456 applications received the MSP disapproved 585 of those applications. In 2022 of the 118,262 applications received by the MSP 518 were disapproved. The disapproval rate before and after the Bruen decision of the Supreme Court and Marylands dropping of the "good and substantial" reasoning for issuing permits remains the same. None of those previous 200 plus thousand approved permit holders from 2019 and 2020 went around committing crimes with those permits. These permit holders haven been proven for decades not to be the cause of violent crime or firearms related crime in the state of Maryland. There is just no evidence to support any other position.

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In order to receive a Maryland wear and carry permit and use it a state resident is background checked 3 times by the MSP. Once when they submit an application for the Handgun Qualification License (HQL), another time when they purchase a regulated firearm and fill out Maryland's 77R form and wait the 7 day period for the MSP to complete their background check that includes not only criminal history but medical/mental health history as well. The third time comes after they submit their application for the carry permit that has up to a ninety day waiting period for approval. During these application and background checks, the applicant has given MSP permission to search medical and criminal backgrounds as well as submit digital finger prints, a passport sized photo of the applicant and 3 character references for the MSP to interview. Maryland wear and carry permit holders are well vetted and checked by our terrific MSP very well. Not only are these permit holders thoroughly vetted by MSP they also have to undergo a sixteen hour course that covers Maryland law, handgun safety, and a twenty five round live fire test to pass the course. This is a costly process for the applicant, not only in time but financially. To obtain a wear and carry permit in the state of Maryland it costs the applicant upwards of three hundred and fifty dollars just for course and application fees. Why would a criminally minded person go through all this time, expense, and background investigation? Why would they make themselves known to the MSP? They don't, and they wouldn't go through this process. Instead they steal guns or buy them illegally on the black market. The folks applying for wear and carry permits in the state of Maryland are citizens interested in staying on the right side of the law, that's why they endure the time an expense and give up their medical privacy because they want to do right and they understand that in a state where crime is on the increase and the penalties for criminals are on the decrease, self protection is becoming more of a reality for them.

Maryland has some of the most comprehensive and convoluted gun laws in the country. There is already law on the books in regards to regulated firearms and it is much more extensive than SB1 for those types of firearms. Maryland criminal law 4-203 states that a regulated firearm may not be transported to any destination except, the range, a licensed FFL dealer or repair shop, hunting, or to a competition. While transporting to one of the above mentioned destinations, no other stops can be made along the way. The firearm must also be unloaded and stored separate from the ammunition and must remain out of the drivers reach for the duration of the trip. This means that no destination except the few above mentioned are lawful for anyone to transport a regulated firearm within the state and only to those specific destinations, any other destination would be unlawful. For example, if a person without a valid Maryland wear and carry permit is transporting a handgun to an FFL dealer for repair or other service, that individual may not stop for gas, coffee, or any other reason, no exceptions or they are in violation of section 4-203. This section of the Maryland criminal law is already more exclusive to the transportation of regulated firearms in the state of Maryland, leading SB1 to single out wear and carry permit holders, hunters and competition shooters of long guns, both state and non state residents. There is no data to support any claims these groups of firearm owners are causing harm to the public with their firearms. There is only data to show they are NOT harming the public with their firearms and SB1 with prejudice is assuming them criminals. This bill will make it near impossible for anyone to move about the state of Maryland with a firearm legally. Even forcing some firearm dealers to close or force them to relocate their business because they are located within one hundred feet of a place of public accommodation.

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The criminal element will not be affected at all by SB1 except making more firearms vulnerable to theft having to be locked in cars while their owner is forced to leave them behind and park at least one hundred feet away from a place of public accommodation. So to set the stage, SB1 is requiring lawful firearm owners with a wear and carry permit, to leave their handgun locked in their vehicle and park as far away from the store as possible, were there are less people, less cameras an is easier for the criminal element to steal that firearm. Criminals are predators and lie in wait in parking lots looking for victims. They will be watching to see if anyone is leaving firearms behind when they leave their vehicles for two reasons. One they know that individual is defenseless against them and two, now they have a gun they can steal easily in order to commit more crimes or sell for cash, drugs or whatever else a criminal does with a stolen firearm.

There is no justification the state of Maryland can make to support the need for SB1 other than the bills sponsor(s) personal disdain for firearms. Policy based of personal opinion with no regard to actual data is not how our legislative process is supposed to work. Senate Bill 1 singles out and persecutes a significant portion of Marylands population with no actual data to support the need for this legislation.

I urge you to please withdraw this Senate Bill 1 and let the law abiding firearms owners of Maryland be without unwarranted harassment and persecution.

Thank you,



Charles Knaggs