

Good afternoon! My name is Judy Thacher, and I live in Carroll County. I own two horses and have ridden the trails in Carroll County for 20+ years. We are here testifying today because it is completely unfair of the well-funded hunting industry – which already has 6 days a week for shooting lethal weapons outdoors – to try to get the 7th day, which traditionally has been reserved as the one day of the week for the other 98% of the population, who are not hunters, to enjoy our area's lovely green areas without the fear of being shot at. Carroll County is especially important to non-hunter outdoor enthusiasts because Carroll County has many of the best riding venues of the state, including Morgan Run, McKeldin, Patapsco, Union Mills, Piney Run, Liberty and Gillis Falls. I have ridden all these venues, but only on Sundays, to avoid getting shot at. Hunting is permitted on abutting private land, and the hunting projectiles fired there do not stop at the property boundary but too often come onto the abutting public parkland as there the trails are near the property boundary.

Back 25 years ago when Sunday Hunting was first being seriously lobbied for, then-Governor Parris Glendening expressed precisely those sentiments in a very well-worded and impassioned plea -- to retain that one safe-outside day. And it is even more true today, when the value of outdoor exercise and communicating with nature is even more recognized.

I will not reiterate – but 100% endorse – the data and arguments Jane Siegler Christy Claggett and others will be presenting but want to stress the data that Jane Seigler presents that allowing Sunday hunting does not increase the total weekly deer “take”.

I also want to emphasize that I am one of the many outdoor enthusiasts who has been shot at while recreating in a public area by a hunter in the abutting private land. In fact, I have been fired on two separate occasions riding on recognized trails in Montgomery County. Evidently none of those “great hunters” recognized my orange safety vest, and my black and white horse below me does not look like a five-point deer. And I have been fired at, on my own property and in my own barn while cleaning stalls. I was not a happy camper to say the least. And let me add it was not hunting season.

One of my favorite Delegates here in Annapolis had a similar experience of being shot at while recruiting in an area park.

Let me also point out that if hunters are so unsuccessful in the 6 days per week they already have and endanger non-hunter outdoor enthusiasts, why think the 7th day will solve any deer problem?

Maybe the bill advocates assume that life in Carroll County is so rural that their proposed increased hunting would not endanger neighbors. Carroll County's myriad wonderful parks are a destination riding venue for so many residents of the state, and many of the trails in those parks are well within firing range of the abutting private property. It seems most inappropriate -- and dangerous -- to take away the one day a week when outdoor enthusiasts can enjoy the outdoors without fear of being shot at by the tiny percentage of the population who are hunters. Please, vote against SB5417, to keep Sunday safe for the other 98% of the population. We, non-hunters, want to be able to ride our horses and relax outdoors, without the fear of being shot, at least one day per week. Hunters have already claimed the other six days.

Thank you,

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