

**Institute for Legislative Action**

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**NRA**

February 17, 2025

Chairman Smith and Members of the Committee on Judicial Proceedings,

My name is John Weber, and I represent the National Rifle Association and our members in Maryland. The NRA is opposed to SB 943.

This legislation presents a risk to the constitutional rights of Maryland citizens by allowing protective orders to be issued based on an invasive questionnaire that hunts into personal details about the social network of the accused. This legislation opens the door for frivolous claims where personal grievances could lead to the wrongful stripping of someone's Second Amendment rights. The broadness of the criteria for filing a petition could easily be exploited, potentially turning these laws into tools for harassment rather than protection.

There are serious Fourth Amendment concerns with this legislation as well. The provision that allows law enforcement to search any location where they believe a firearm might be found, based simply on probable cause, is an overreach into the privacy of Maryland citizens. This potentially violates the Fourth Amendment's protections against unreasonable searches and sets a dangerous precedent for government intrusion into private life.

This bill lacks sufficient due process protections. Respondents could have their rights stripped away based solely on accusations. Individuals will not be given an adequate opportunity for defense or the presumption of innocence.

The expansive questionnaire, which requires details about one's personal life, friends, and activities, turns the process into a fishing expedition which will divert resources from targeted interventions based on clear evidence of danger. The inclusion of questions about one's social connections in this bill could lead to a chilling effect on associational freedom. This not only affects personal relationships but also our broader communities.

SB 943 is not likely to reduce gun violence. Rather than disarming law-abiding citizens through bureaucratic means we should be advocating for solutions such as improved mental health services, education, and community support systems. These alternatives would respect constitutional rights while addressing public safety.

In conclusion, I respectfully request an unfavorable report on SB 943.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

NRA-ILA State Director