

House Bill 0387
Comprehensive Community Safety Funding Act
Unfavorable

I am here today to express my strong opposition to House Bill 387, which proposes a tax on firearm manufacturing. This bill, in my view, unfairly penalizes law-abiding firearm owners and youth shooting clubs.

My personal experiences have shaped my perspective on this issue. I am a survivor of multiple violent crimes: my grandfather was a murder victim, I am a survivor of domestic violence, and during my teenage years, I was the victim of an armed robbery. It was precisely because of my early exposure to firearms, coupled with education, discipline, and a deep respect for their power, that I recognized the gravity of that robbery. Having learned about firearm mechanics through target shooting with my father, I understood the significance of the moment the perpetrator cocked and chambered the handgun pointed at my chest. Only then did I comply with their demands, knowing that any sudden movement could have had devastating consequences.

My experiences have taught me that the problem is not the firearm itself, but the individual wielding it with criminal intent. Statistics consistently demonstrate that firearms used in crimes are often obtained illegally, and therefore, would not be subject to this proposed tax. Had I not possessed this understanding, the outcome of that robbery could have been tragically different. I believe I, and every law-abiding citizen, have the right to defend themselves and their families without facing the financial

burdens this bill would impose. Taxing the exercise of a constitutional right is, in effect, taxation without representation.

I am grateful to my parents for instilling in me not a fear of firearms, but a healthy respect for their proper use and safety. My husband and I have raised our children with the same principles. We believe in the constitutional right to self-defense, the protection of loved ones and our community, and the ability to participate in the education, sport, hobby, and even the harvest associated with legal firearm ownership. Legislators should not infringe upon these rights through ill-conceived and misguided legislation like this.

Rather than imposing new taxes, I urge the committee to conduct a thorough audit of existing state spending. We must identify and eliminate wasteful expenditures. The current allocation of funds does not appear to be effectively addressing the root causes of violence, particularly in designated “gun-free” zones in Baltimore City, where I live in neighboring Howard County, and other areas struggling with crime. Legal firearm ownership should not be equated with activities like tobacco use, gambling, or alcohol consumption, and therefore, should not be subjected to similar excise taxes.

I strongly oppose House Bill 387.

Respectfully,

Mary Rader

February 13, 2025