

House Bill 0937

Sales and Use Tax – Firearms, Firearm Accessories, and Ammunition

Rate Alteration

Unfavorable

I'm here today to express my strong opposition to House Bill 937. This bill, in my view, unfairly targets youth shooting sports and demonstrates a lack of understanding regarding both the dedication of these young athletes and the broader context of youth sports equipment.

We readily acknowledge the importance of safety and responsibility in teaching accountability to our children. And yet, the state doesn't impose taxes on essential safety equipment in other youth sports. Think about it: helmets and shoulder pads in football, goggles for swimming, shin guards in soccer, or even the balls, bats, clubs, and rackets used in baseball, golf, and tennis. The list is extensive. Why then, should we single out youth shooting sports and impose taxes on their necessary equipment?

I'm concerned that this bill focuses narrowly on potential budget gains or personal biases, while overlooking the many Maryland youth who participate in diverse shooting sport disciplines and programs. These young athletes are involved in competitive shooting, using shotguns, handguns, and rifles, and they strive for excellence. They compete locally, regionally, and nationally, often traveling to neighboring states like Virginia and Pennsylvania, and some even participate in prestigious events at locations like Camp Perry, Ohio, Anniston, Alabama, and the National Training Center in Colorado. These young people represent Maryland's finest,

and their dedication deserves our support, not financial burdens that could hinder their progress and potentially cost them scholarship opportunities at the collegiate and even international levels.

We all want to equip our youth with the tools they need to succeed – knowledge, skills, and opportunities. We should not be crippling them with fear, misinformation, or a lack of respect and empathy for others. Nor should we be fostering poor discipline and leadership. This bill risks doing just that, unfairly targeting these young athletes based on their chosen sport.

Furthermore, continued targeting of Maryland residents and businesses related to firearms will not achieve the desired outcome. Instead, it will simply drive business and revenue to neighboring states, ultimately harming Maryland's economy.

For these reasons, I am vehemently opposed to any surcharges, fees, or taxes specifically targeting a select group of citizens, and I urge you to reject House Bill 937.

Respectfully,

Mary Rader
February 13, 2025