

## **HB0875**

While this bill may appear modest, it raises important constitutional and practical concerns. First, HB0875 compels private businesses to distribute government-mandated messaging at the point of sale. This implicates the First Amendment and the prohibition on compelled speech, as recognized in *National Institute of Family and Life Advocates v. Becerra*. In that case, the Supreme Court made clear that the government cannot force private actors to convey its preferred messages without satisfying heightened constitutional scrutiny. HB0875 risks running afoul of that principle.

Second, the bill imposes additional regulatory burdens on federally licensed firearms dealers, who are already among the most heavily regulated retailers in the country. These businesses must comply with extensive federal requirements under the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, as well as Maryland's own strict laws. Adding another mandate—however well-intentioned—creates compliance risks without clear evidence of public safety benefit.

Third, there is little data to suggest that distributing literature at the point of sale meaningfully reduces crime or misuse. According to data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics, most individuals who commit gun crimes do not obtain firearms through lawful retail channels. As a result, this bill primarily affects law-abiding purchasers, not those engaged in criminal activity.

Finally, Maryland already ranks among the states with the strongest firearm regulations, as noted by the Giffords Law Center. Rather than adding new mandates, the State would be better served by focusing on enforcement of existing laws and targeting repeat offenders.

In closing, HB0875 creates constitutional concerns, imposes unnecessary burdens on lawful businesses, and is unlikely to achieve its intended public safety outcomes. For these reasons, I respectfully urge an unfavorable report.

Thank you for your time and consideration.