

# Testimony Against HB0197

Honorable Delegates

Please enter an unfavorable decision about HB0197.

I am opposed to

- Imposing an excise tax on certain gross receipts of certain firearms dealers derived from the
  - sales of firearms, firearm accessories, and ammunition in the State and
  - sales of firearms to residents of the State;
- requiring the Comptroller to distribute a portion of the tax revenues to the
  - Maryland Violence Intervention Program,
  - the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention,
  - the Coordinated Community Supports Partnership,
  - the Survivors of Homicide Victims Program,
  - the Trauma Physician Services Fund, and
  - the Cowley Shock Trauma Center

This bill hides another attack on the lawful gun owners in Maryland by hiding its intent with the feel good title of the Comprehensive Community Safety Funding Act. Who could be against community safety?

While the title says one thing, it is actually making the price of guns and ammunition too expensive for lower income people to purchase guns for their protection. The bill establishes an 11 percent excise tax on the gross receipts from the sale of firearms, firearm accessories, or ammunition in the State by a federally licensed firearms dealer located both within the State and specified dealers outside the State.

Where is crime the highest? It is predominantly in the poorer areas of urban areas. Who lives in these areas? It is predominantly people of color. While the more affluent can pay these increased fees, those who live where crime is the highest will not be able to do so. Consequently, by lowering gun and ammo sales because of increasing fees, this bill will actually make many communities less safe.

The Racial Equity Impact Note for this bill supports my objections. It states, “According to the Congressional Research Service and research from both government and academic sources, excise taxes imposed on sellers may be passed through to consumers, depending on market conditions, competition, and demand elasticity. In situations where sellers do pass through the tax to buyers, excise taxes are considered regressive, meaning that households with lower incomes pay a larger share of their income in excise tax-related price increases than households with higher incomes.”

“Black Marylanders are overwhelmingly affected by gun violence as compared to other demographic groups.” Based on, fatal and nonfatal firearm-related incidents in Maryland as reported from hospital visits statewide between 2022 and 2024, “... Black individuals accounted for 61 percent of fatal injuries and 70 percent of nonfatal injuries.”

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“Household income in Maryland is stratified by race and ethnicity. Black, Hispanic, and American Indian/Alaska Native households generally have lower incomes than white households. To the extent the firearm excise tax imposed by the bill is passed through to consumers, the tax may place a larger financial burden on lower income households and, by extension, households of color.”

See [2026RS-HB0197-REIN.pdf \(maryland.gov\)](#)

If this bill becomes law, fewer people of color will be able to afford already expensive guns and ammunition. Whether the four listed groups that will receive 92 percent of the collected excise fees, less administrative costs, will do anything to significantly reduce crime and improve safety is unknown. Thus, I doubt that this bill will be effective in meeting the stated goal.

Moreover, I still maintain that the purpose of this bill is actually to reduce the number of guns that law abiding people can own and keep those who have guns from buying the ammunition that makes them effective all in the mistaken belief that fewer gun sales will reduce crime.

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