

HB0197  
Opposed (UNF)  
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Esteemed Delegates,

I oppose House Bill 0197, also titled "Comprehensive Community Safety Funding Act." This bill, if enacted, will make it less affordable to purchase firearms in the state of Maryland. This bill places additional burden on small businesses outside the state of Maryland who serve Maryland customers.

Most of the FFLs in the state would be considered small businesses. I do not believe that many, if any at all, will choose to absorb the 11% excise tax being proposed for firearms, ammunition, and firearm accessories. This excise tax will be wholly passed on to the consumer. The bill increases prices in an economy where affordability is hard to find and will continue to be hard to find for the foreseeable future.

Increasing prices makes it more difficult to defend oneself from 2 perspectives. The first and most concerning perspective is the increased tax on ammunition. Practicing with live ammunition is a crucial part of being able to defend oneself. Practice of this type improves firearm handling and accuracy. Increasing the price of ammunition increases the price to practice. This means that firearm owners may choose to practice less than before. Practice without live ammunition is possible, although the accessories required for this will also increase in price, which presents the same problem.

The second perspective is the increased price of the firearm itself. In an economy where people are looking for affordability, increasing firearm prices will drive customers to cheaper firearms. Some of the firearms that are cheaper have been found to have lower reliability. I would consider reliability here to mean the firearm functions as intended without any stoppages. These firearms function most of the time but may stop due to poor quality control, cheap ammo, or a combination of those 2 factors. For sporting purposes, a firearm functioning 98 out of 100 times is fine, but for a self-defense situation this can be the difference between living and dying.

The excise tax also places an additional burden on small businesses outside the state of Maryland if a firearm must be transferred into the state of Maryland. These small businesses will be expected to balance their own state tax codes along with the state of Maryland. Small businesses should not be expected to collect another state's taxes when the point of sale occurs in that state even if the firearm must be shipped to Maryland. Many of these businesses will simply close their doors to Maryland citizens, which is a disservice to those businesses and the residents of Maryland.

Regards,

Sam Dennison