



# THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF MARYLAND

Testimony of the Rev. Kenneth O. Phelps, Jr.

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Before the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

**IN SUPPORT of SB 958**

Criminal law – Untraceable Firearms

March 3, 2020

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

Non-violence is at the core of Christian faith and practice. The teachings of Jesus – as contained in the New Testament – call the faithful to a rejection of a system of retribution and righteous violence and into an alternative way of living that is based on unconditional love of neighbor and accountability for the common good.

We cannot normalize violence or contemplate its use ever as being for the right. And, we do not believe that the answer to escalating gun violence is an increase in the number of guns on the street.

Over the years, our bishops have called for common sense gun safety measures that enjoy the support of gun owners and non-gun owners alike: handgun purchaser licensing; background checks on all gun purchasers; restrictions on gun ownership by domestic abusers; classification of gun trafficking as a federal crime; encouragement for the development of “smart gun” technology; and, federal funding for research into gun violence prevention strategies. Our Church has passed numerous resolutions calling for many of these measures.

We now add to that list our support of this ban on the production, possession or sale of all ‘ghost guns.’

Among other prohibitions, this Bill prohibits the use of a 3 D printer to assemble a firearm, the distribution of a program that shows how to assemble the firearm, and also the sale or possession of an untraceable firearm.

The Bill is in line with current trends including the efforts of a coalition of 20 states including Maryland, that are suing the federal government to challenge the Trump Administration’s plan to allow people to share 3 D printed gun blueprints on line.

According to the Giffords Law Center “ghost guns” are typically untraceable and can be made with a printer that can be purchased by anyone for under \$200.00

California Law Enforcement reports that ghost guns were used in several rampages in their schools killing a total of 13 people in the last several years.

We urge a favorable report.