

Written Testimony of Jesse Ferguson, resident of Caroline County, Maryland, in Opposition to SB0958

I am a hard-working husband, father of two young girls, and a native of Maryland's Eastern Shore. I am an avid hunter, firearms collector, and participant in all manners of competition involving shooting and firearms. I am also a handyman, tinkerer, amateur mechanic, and I build my own firearms. More on that in a minute.

Prior to 1968, manufacturers of firearms were not required to stamp a serial number on their products. Many did not. Unlike other consumer products, firearms are usually well cared for and passed down from generation to generation. There are a great many firearms that are in the hands of law-abiding gun owners that were manufactured prior to 1968. There are a great many firearms, now considered to be family heirlooms, that lack a serial number. Some of these are identical models that are still sold today. In these cases, it is impossible to know when a firearm was manufactured. Thus, for those firearms, it is impossible to prove that they were manufactured prior to 1968.

As for my own home-built firearms, they are not the wood and steel heirlooms that I mention above. They are modern, they are polymer and aluminum. Will they be heirlooms in 30 or 50 years? I hope so. Will they have serial numbers? I would like to think no. For my firearms it makes no sense to serialize them.

I do not build my own firearms to avoid a background check. I continue to purchase serialized firearms and I complete background check requirements. I build my own firearms because I am a hobbyist. I build my own firearms because I want to understand physics, mechanical design, and because I enjoy frustrating myself.

The first "ghost gun" I built cost more to manufacture than a brand-new Glock, which costs between \$400 and \$500. Factoring in parts alone (\$650), I spent more building this gun than I

would have to simply buy a new handgun. Considering the used market, I probably paid double. Factoring in the time needed to troubleshoot, massage, tune, test – over multiple iterations, I would have been able to purchase 3-4 used handguns for the same investment in this single handgun. Was it frustrating? Yes. Was it rewarding? Yes. Should it be illegal? No.

The cost of a stolen handgun on the black market varies rarely exceeds \$250.

I am opposed to SB0958 and urge an unfavorable report from the committee.

Sincerely,

Jesse Ferguson

Federalsburg, MD

jessebferguson@gmail.com