

A Testimony in Opposition of a Proposed House Bill (HB0004)

Good afternoon Delegates,

My name is Giovannie Lopez, lifelong Maryland resident and pro-gun advocate, and I am here today to voice my opposition to the proposed house bill (HB0004).

This bill, if passed into law, will effectively destroy the ability for law abiding citizens to buy, sell, loan, and/or trade perfectly legal and non-restricted firearms by requiring the use of a federal firearms license holder to essentially act as an unnecessary tax upon every firearms transfer.

If a law-abiding citizen of Maryland wishes to transfer a long-gun (e.g. rifle or shotgun) unto another law-abiding, responsible, and otherwise non-restricted person, then why should they have to sacrifice the valuable time out of their days and pay processing fees which in many areas average around \$50 per firearm? This bill would effectively stifle the resale value of many collectors of firearms, myself included, by forcing us to pay a de facto tax and complicating what was and still is an innocent and voluntary transaction between adults.

To say that I need to go through an FFL to transfer a long gun to someone I know and trust, such as if I were to sell my WW2 bolt action rifle to a friend, or if I were to gift my sister with my sporting 5.56 rifle, is comparable to say that I need to take a car to a dealer ship and pay them just to sell it off to someone else.

According to the latest data from the FBI, in Maryland, there were 470 murders in 2018. Of those 470 murders, 1 (less than 1%) was committed with a rifle and 10 (2%) were committed with shotguns.

This bill would only serve to make criminal an act that has been perfectly legal for centuries and be a direct infringement upon the right of citizens to keep and bear arms for all lawful intentions and purposes, including self-defense, as is specified in our constitution and as is upheld by the D.C. vs. Heller supreme court ruling.

Moreover, this bill for reasons unbeknownst to many, criminalizes the innocent act of merely loaning someone a gun more severely than it does for the actual theft of firearms within the state. Violation of HB0004 would incur imprisonment for up to 5 years and/or fines of up to \$10,000. In contrast, Specifically, under current Maryland law, a firearm theft is treated like any other theft of personal property. Under current law, theft of property valued less than \$1,500 but more than \$100 is punishable by a fine of \$500 and a maximum six months imprisonment on first offense. MD Code Criminal Law § 7-104(g)(4). A conviction for this offense would not even be sufficient to make the firearm thief a prohibited person. See MD Code Public Safety § 5-101(g)(3) (defining “disqualifying crime”).

I would happily discuss my innumerable protests against this bill, and the many others like it currently in law, however, I am aware that our time is limited. Thank you for your time, and I implore you to research into the ramifications of this bill and to reconsider any support you may have for it. Thank you.