

Respectfully submitted by CDR Richard L Jurgena in support of HB1241

While firearms dealerships are usually small businesses, I urge you to consider the damage that comes from thefts of firearms to the safety of the community. With that in mind I believe you will conclude that doing what we can do to reduce thefts of firearms should be a priority. All of these guns end up in the hands of people who should not have access to them.

The analysis of this bill results in some interesting information.

“Under the Maryland Constitution, each county and Baltimore City is required to elect a sheriff, who is by common law the primary public safety officer of the jurisdiction.”

“State law also authorizes counties to provide for a separate county police force. Local governments maintaining county police forces include Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Howard, Montgomery, and Prince George’s counties, along with Baltimore City. The law is silent on the specific duties of these county law enforcement agencies. In practice, county police departments have become the primary law enforcement agencies in these counties. The sheriffs’ departments in these counties primarily support judicial functions such as courtroom security and service of process.”

When you consider that the counties where the primary law enforcement responsibilities rests with the Sheriff, who is responsible directly to the voters, are the safest and the counties where the public safety is worse are the counties where the law enforcement is responsible to the political administration, I think you will agree something is out of kilter.

I respectfully urge you to vote favorable on this bill and also consider writing and sponsoring another bill, requiring our counties to assign and fund Sheriffs’ offices with the responsibility for the public safety and county police forces to primarily support judicial functions. Common law is very often the best choice.

Respectfully,

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