

Stoney Creek Fishing & Hunting Club

9090 Ft. Smallwood Rd.

Pasadena, MD 21122

February 20, 2020

HB 618: Sales and Use Tax – Exemption – Firearm Safety Devices **Testimony submitted by the Stoney Creek Fishing and Hunting Club** **Support**

The Stoney Creek Fishing and Hunting Club, which has some 300 members and has been in existence for over 70 years, strongly **SUPPORTS** HB 618. We support the Bill because it is a very positive step toward enhancing firearm safety and will help reduce the number of firearms that are stolen from homes and end up in illicit trade.

Firearms security is of paramount importance if we are to reduce accidents related to the unauthorized access to firearms by minors. When firearms, whether loaded or unloaded, are improperly stored, the risk of unauthorized handling or use of the firearms can increase dramatically. The Gifford's Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence (<https://lawcentergiffords.org/gun-laws/policy-areas/child-consumer-saf...>) has reported: "Estimates suggest that modest increases in the number of homes safely storing firearms could prevent a third of gun deaths due to suicide and unintentional firearm injury."

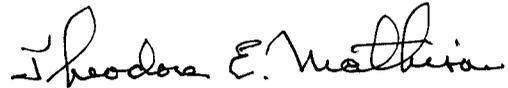
The traditional approach in Maryland, as well as some other states, has been to increase the penalties levied against parents, etc. who fail to secure firearms in their homes. However, these laws are "after the fact", and their effectiveness is questionable. A better, more proactive approach is to prevent access in the first place.

The second significant benefit of securing firearms in the home is to prevent firearm thefts. The Gifford's Law Center (<https://lawcenter.giffords.org/gun-laws/policy-areas/gun-owner-response...>) indicates that nationally "...representative survey data indicates that approximately 380,000 guns are stolen from individual gun owners each year." This number is based on various estimates and appears to use data collected in 2002. Nonetheless, the number of stolen firearms is still significant. If by encouraging owners to secure their firearms, this number could perhaps be reduced significantly. It would be a big step in reducing crimes committed using stolen firearms.

Firearm cable locks (the cable goes through the firearm's action) and trigger locks are relatively inexpensive costing about \$10 to \$20 a piece. Safes, which have the advantage of preventing access to a firearm altogether, cost upwards of \$400 depending upon the capacity, fire rating etc. With adoption of HB 618, we would be looking at relatively modest cost savings even on the \$400 safe (\$24); but the savings might be enough to encourage use of these security devices thereby saving lives and reducing gun thefts. We believe it will be well worth the effort.

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We urge that HB 681 receive a favorable report.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Theodore E. Mathison". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'T'.

Theodore E. Mathison
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