

Roland Perry Neil Sharpless¹
SB624 – UNF
Judicial Proceedings Committee
2/17/2021

IN OPPOSITION TO SB 624

The hundreds of murderers who kill people in Baltimore and elsewhere in the state each year are just laughing at this bill. It places more difficult-to-follow restrictions on the law-abiding, and it does nothing to reduce the reasons why people kill other people.

This bill creates criminals where none existed before. It penalizes non-violent activity. It is absurd on its face. From the bill:

A PERSON MAY NOT POSSESS A FIREARM OR AN UNFINISHED FRAME OR RECEIVER THAT HAS NOT BEEN MARKED IN ACCORDANCE WITH SUBSECTIONS (A)AND (B)OF THIS SECTION.

And:

“UNFINISHED FRAME OR RECEIVER” INCLUDES A BLANK, CASTING, OR MACHINED BODY THAT REQUIRES MODIFICATION, SUCH AS MACHINING, DRILLING, FILING, OR MOLDING, TO BE USED AS PART OF A FUNCTIONAL FIREARM

Paraphrasing the words in the bill:

A PERSON MAY NOT POSSESS A [BLANK, CASTING, OR MACHINED BODY THAT REQUIRES MODIFICATION, SUCH AS MACHINING, DRILLING, FILING, OR MOLDING, TO BE USED AS PART OF A FUNCTIONAL FIREARM] THAT HAS NOT BEEN MARKED IN ACCORDANCE WITH SUBSECTIONS (A)AND (B)OF THIS SECTION.

Regardless of its intent, what the bill does is outlaw possession of every piece of metal that is ***able to be turned into*** a firearm unless the engraving requirements are met. Read the bill’s words!

Any student of gun control quickly realizes the racist roots of gun control², of which this bill is but another example. Every existing and future homemade gun in the state is required to be engraved. To done effectively and to ensure that the depth and font height are correct all but requires the services of a professional engraver. That service costs money, and thus disproportionately affects people of low income. Richer people can bear the cost of hiring an

¹ Try fitting that name and the other engraving that would be required by this bill onto a firearm.

² The reader is encouraged to google the phrase “racist origins of gun control.”

engraver, but poorer people are less able to bear the cost burden. Like being able to pay bail, wealthy people get privileged treatment while low-income people suffer.

There other reasons that this bill lacks any consideration by the committee, but the two points that I have addressed are reason enough to vote unfavorably on SB 624.

Maryland lawmakers consistently seek to vilify gun owners instead of placing the blame where it belongs – on those people who use guns for criminal purposes. Maryland lawmakers consistently fail to take actions that result in meaningful reductions in crime. The Firearms Safety Act of 2013 included sweeping gun control legislation. Since its passage, murder rates in the state have done nothing but increase. Meanwhile, as Maryland lawmakers continue to emphasize gun control instead of crime control, almost a third of the states³ have enacted constitutional carry, meaning that their citizens are not required to obtain any type permit whatsoever to carry a gun. Maryland, with its emphasis on strict gun control, has the dubious distinction of having its largest city consistently lead the nation in per capita homicides. Gun control is not crime control.

While I encourage you stop pursuing gun control as a means of crime control, which I hope is your ultimate objective, I do encourage you to pursue efforts to reduce the reasons why people want to murder other people. The best analysis that I have ever seen on the matter is from The Guardian's article "Want to fix gun violence in America? Go local."⁴ Baltimore is prominently featured. From the article:

Four and a half million Americans live in areas of these cities with the highest numbers of gun homicide, which are marked by intense poverty, low levels of education, and racial segregation. Geographically, these neighborhood areas are small: a total of about 1,200 neighborhood census tracts, which, laid side by side, would fit into an area just 42 miles wide by 42 miles long.

The problem they face is devastating. Though these neighborhood areas contain just 1.5% of the country's population, they saw 26% of America's total gun homicides.

³ Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Idaho, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Mississippi, Missouri, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Vermont, West Virginia, and Wyoming are all constitutional carry states. Additional states have constitutional carry bills before their legislature this year.

⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/ng-interactive/2017/jan/09/special-report-fixing-gun-violence-in-america>

There's your "gun violence" problem – poverty, lack of education, segregation. Make meaningful progress in those areas and you can make actual progress on reducing our nation-leading homicide rate.

I urge an unfavorable report on SB 624.

Roland Perry Neil Sharpless
4998 Linganore View Dr.
Monrovia, MD 21770