

February 25, 2021

## WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF SCOTT G. DAVIS IN OPPOSITION TO HB 1291

I appreciate the opportunity to present my testimony in opposition to HB 1291 to the members of this committee this afternoon.

This same bill was defeated during the 2020 MGA session as well as the 2019 MGA session. It was made perfectly clear that everyone that owns one of the proposed “ghost guns” becomes an instant criminal. Not only that, but we now have a 2 year watered down version of this bill (HB 638) being heard on the exact same day as this one. It is clear that the Representative that authored this bill has no knowledge of the previous years’ work. I am not going to take the time to hold the hand of this Representative to show him the path that has been taken to get to HB 638. Having said that, I refuse to let the MGA make a criminal out of me, a law abiding citizen, for no reason. This can be summed up rather easily. ***Us law abiding gun owners are tired of being the Maryland General Assembly’s scapegoat for gun crime. Furthermore, copy and paste bills such as this deserve nothing more than copy and paste testimony from previous failed attempts to pass bad legislation.***

Building firearms has become one of my favorite hobbies over the years. I enjoy building firearms from un-serialized 80 percent receivers for my own personal use. AR style receivers are my firearms of choice, mainly for target shooting purposes. I have invested a lot of money in tooling and a lot of money into the firearms.

There is a stigma attached to “80 percent receivers”, “AR rifles/pistols” and so called “ghost guns”. These terms translate to “untraceable firearms” in the political arena. The mere mention of those words seem to conjure up fear, murder & crime in the minds of people that are not familiar with the hobby of building such guns. I assure you that all of us law abiding citizens that partake in this hobby are not criminals. We are people that enjoy working with our hands, enjoy problem solving and enjoy reaping the benefits of our labor once a project is complete. There are many of us.

How many innocent, law abiding lives does this panel find acceptable to ruin with stiff punishments, heavy fines and jail time by passing this bill? There are going to be far more law abiding people caught in this trap vs the virtually non-existent criminal activity that happens with these types of firearms. How many people can you statistically find that have used any of the types of guns that are outlined in this bill for criminal activity in the State of Maryland? I prefer that we focus on the severe crime problems that we already have instead of focusing on the anticipation of something that has not happened or very rarely occurs.

*I quote one of the Democratic Delegates in the House of Representatives as saying, “You can't just pass a bill and say, OK, crime is solved”. – Baltimore Sun 2/21/2020*

---

This is a very logical statement and I agree wholeheartedly. This statement was not in regards to this bill but this same reasoning applies to this bill, HB 1291. We can't just pass this bill and say, OK crime is solved. I do not understand why we, as a whole, are not applying this same logic when it comes to lawful abiding gun owners that enjoy building our own firearms for lawful purposes. This is just another bill that punishes home gun builders by creating criminals out of law abiding citizens.

The price that it takes to make a home built gun is equivalent to, or more, than it costs to buy the same gun that is already built by a manufacturer. We already know that statistically our crime problem is overwhelmingly committed by criminals using stolen handguns. It makes no sense for a criminal to research and buy an 80 percent kit, researching which particular type of expensive tooling to buy, purchasing all of the tooling and then learn how to build a firearm when they can simply buy a used, stolen gun for a small fraction of the price and without the hassles of researching, tooling and building. While the criminal closure rate remains very low in our state's high crime areas, law abiding gun owners and home builders tend to be the scapegoated group that takes the brunt of proposed legislation such as this bill.

It does nothing to stop homicides and suicides. Criminals do not follow the law. Even if *all* guns were banned and confiscated in this state, it will not change the mentality of the people that are committing homicides.

When is the MGA going to move the focus of our homicide and suicide issues to a "people problem" instead of a "gun problem?" Until the MGA starts to focus on what drives people to commit these crimes, address the issues and come up with common sense solutions, this homicide problem does not go away. ***Us law abiding gun owners are tired of being the Maryland General Assembly's scapegoat for gun crime.*** The problem is not us hobbyists.

I request an unfavorable report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Scott Davis". The signature is stylized, with the first letters of "Scott" and "Davis" being large and prominent.

Scott G. Davis