

Carol DeSoto

From: Crystal Hunt
Sent: Thursday, December 29, 2022 6:49 AM
To: Carol DeSoto
Cc: Julie M. Bryson
Subject: Fw: Comments on Bill 2022-14 Weapons and Firearms Prohibited on County-Owned or Operated Property

Carol:

Good morning. Forwarding for your action/records. Public comment on legislation.

Crystal

From: Dr. Douglas Rose <douglasrose75@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, December 28, 2022 12:42 PM
Subject: Comments on Bill 2022-14 Weapons and Firearms Prohibited on County-Owned or Operated Property

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Commissioners,

Since the county website truncates public comment on legislative items, I'm enclosing my full remarks below.

The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) is an organization that specializes in defending civil rights with a clear track record of victories against organized racial hatred. The SPLC specifically opposes individuals in positions of power with a noted history of attempting to enforce discriminatory policies and practices when they say these types of hateful individuals

"...should not be the ones implementing policies that are not rooted in data, community input, or evidence-based solutions".

Over and over throughout COVID, I asked the Commissioners, 4 of which are still here, what their own data-driven analysis was used to impose restrictions on the community. I asked for insight into how you arrived at the decisions you made throughout the pandemic and got no answer other than " we are listening to Dr. Abney". Why does the community suffer your salaries if you are just a body with a rubber stamp? Unless each of you has changed your position and has embraced the power of critical thinking in exempting yourself from the restrictions within Bill 2022-14, I have similar questions. What data are you using to backstop this bill?

Do you consider your workplaces to be unsafe? Are you saying the CCSO can't or doesn't protect you? Have there been armed attacks on your offices that we don't know about? What is your data-driven argument that shows that each of you and your lives are more valuable than the people of this county that lawfully carry weapons for hunting or personal protection? Are you saying that crime in Charles County is so rampant that you fear for your safety? If so, I'd be curious how these beliefs align with your party's efforts to defund law enforcement.

Tell the community specifically how you think another gun restriction will have a real impact on those bent on violent acts. I am not against reasonable restrictions, and I agree nobody but sworn law enforcement officers or active military members with a specific purpose need to carry a weapon in government buildings. That being said, the distance restrictions, given the layout of our county and the density of buildings owned or operated by the county government or the Board of Charles County Commissioners, is nothing short of an end run around Maryland's "shall issue" legislation.

What is the plan to exempt hunters from traveling to and from public hunting lands? This county has a limited roadway system and expansive hunting grounds. Hunting deer specifically helps control an explosive population of those animals. Without that control, because of a lack of ability to legally transport weapons for hunting, will the county be paying for repairs to vehicles when deer strikes increase without that population control? If not, why not? What is the plan to exempt retired law enforcement officers with current LEOSA credentials? Or, is your message meant to say that you think retired law enforcement shouldn't carry weapons?

If you aren't able to provide data-driven arguments and are falling back on your practice of listening to others, then who are you listening to? If you aren't listening to the SPLC, likely the foremost legal authority on the intersection between guns, racism, and those in elected positions of power, who are you listening to? Are you willing to name those sources? If not, why not?

You know you can't answer these questions. Even worse than that, you likely think you don't have to.

By most accounts, Maryland has one of the strongest and most enforced red flag laws in the country. A bulk of conversations at the national level centered on red flag laws draw a connection between mental illness and gun violence, but others think that's more of a gray area. Regardless, I'd again bring you back to another study by the NIH. They insist:

"Policymaking at the interface of gun violence prevention and mental illness should be based on epidemiologic data concerning risk to improve the effectiveness, feasibility, and fairness of policy initiatives".

Assuming your intent behind Bill 2022-14 is the prevention of gun violence, your argument as written lacks data and is a direct threat to the community. If you continue to ignore community concerns and openly flaunt the intent of Maryland's Red Flag laws, you risk significant harm to the entire population of Charles County. **Further, I simply can't abide by your choosing to arm someone with a distinct pattern of open racial hatred.** If you won't adopt evidence-based practices or absorb arguments like this, well, then you leave the population of this county to explore other civil options.

During COVID, those of you that were already on the Board of Commissioners insisted that you were acting with the community's health and safety concerns in mind. If you pass this bill, I want to let you know that I have extensive energy and I'll be glad to do my part in contacting any/all victims of crimes related to these restrictions on lawful firearm possession and transportation. I will absolutely let them know that you've changed your stance and you now insist that your own personal health and safety are more important to you than anyone else's.

Thank you for listening,

Dr. Rose