\*January 9th, 2023

***Subject: Charles County Commissioner’s Bill #2022-51***

President Collins and fellow Commissioners:

My name is Michael Carver and I live in Waldorf. I am writing/speak in opposition to Commissioner’s Bill #2022-51.

I have over forty years of federal service. I retired from the Armed Forces after 22 years, twelve of those as a Security/Law Enforcement Specialist guarding and protecting some of our nation’s most sensitive areas/personnel. The proposed bill will not deter or curve crime and provides no means or plans to enforce it. In fact, it may very well do more harm than good.

Mass shooting events and terrorist targets center around areas where the public gathers, the public is not allowed to possess firearms (it is easy to identify and neutralize armed/unarmed uniformed personnel) and will draw media attention. If this bill passes you will have in one stroke increased the threat level of these facilities/premises, workers, and patrons in a negative fashion. Because you have eliminated the unknown factor from the planning equation.

Additionally, the law as written, prohibits **ALL** firearms and not just handguns. It will cause second and third effects, on the hunting/tourism industry, businesses, and the community at large. For example, MD State Certified Hunter Education Instructors will find it harder if not impossible to teach classes, which I might add includes firearm safety training. Which will no doubt increase hunt/firearm accidents because the courses could not be provided at today’s frequency.

Even with the newly proposed one hundred feet, vs one hundred yards, you are making it hard to get to a firing range to legally maintain firearm proficiency or prepare for the hunting season. One could not simply drive past the Court House, Government Building, Board of Elections, any school, or any Fire Station as this bill prevent a person from doing so. This bill would close off the only route out/back to my home, as I would have to go past EMS/Fire Station 12 or the Wade Elementary School.

Oregon, New York State, New Jersey, and District of Columbia have attempted to do a similar thing, some are being challenged in the courts or have lost. For example a federal judge on Monday ruled New Jersey did not have the “historical tradition” of regulating where a concealed carry permit can be used, much as you are now attempting to do. You simply do not have the authority to impose restrictions like this on private property or on the public roadway. This bill **WILL** subject this Board to a similar legal challenge – something that would be an irresponsible waste of County taxpayer funds and would lose public credibility/confidence.

This bill at best is an ill-conceived and unnecessary bill. In fact, this bill is redundant with Maryland Criminal Code 4-101 in that 4-101 defines “weapons” as “Nunchaku”, “Pepper Mace”, “Star Knife” and other types of knives that are already prohibited at any place at any time with very few exceptions that are listed in Maryland Criminal Code 4-101(b).

Further, this bill would be attempting to invalidate one of those exceptions in its entirety - specifically Maryland Criminal Code 4-101(b)(3) which states an exemption is allowed for “a holder of a permit to carry a handgun issued under Title 5, Subtitle 3 of the Public Safety Article” and does not specify any location restrictions identified in 2022-051.

If the intent is to restrict possession within the building itself, State law already allows you to post a sign at the entrances to accomplish this. It applies to all “Weapons” and “Firearms” including those possessed for lawful and licensed purposes.

Lastly, you bring unnecessary questioning and doubt of the integrity and credibility of the Charles County Commissioners into focus with the special exception provided to them within this bill. Why is the commission creating a law that set them above the common citizen?

In summation, this bill will be viewed, as simply “Feel Good” legislation and a political statement that will have absolutely no impact on deterring crime, creating impossible obstacles for responsible firearm-owning citizens to navigate. Firearm-owning citizens that have gone through extensive criminal background checks, training, evaluations, and expensive costs to protect themselves/others, to enjoy legal activities/traditions that are over two centuries old.

You will open yourself to litigation **WHEN** enforcement is levied on someone who may drive through the “100 feet exclusion zone” on their way to an otherwise legal firearm-related activity. Its poor authorship creates more obstacles to responsible, legal ownership, transport, and use of firearms than it does for solving any problems and should be immediately withdrawn. Remember “Murder” and “Manslaughter” are already against the law and provides for the toughest of penalties.

If you want to make a difference, then work with the court system to stop the revolving door for the criminals. How many cases have we seen where someone is stopped for a vehicle equipment violation and during that interaction, drugs or illegal firearms are discovered? Now with the legalization of recreational marijuana, it may be more difficult to execute a probable cause search of a vehicle resulting in the discovery and seizure of these illegal firearms. Stop the release of these offenders on personal recognizance after their arrest for these crimes and keep them in jail where they belong.

Hard sensitive areas, like our schools, with entrapment areas, metal detectors, armed uniformed.and armed plain clothed guards. Incorporate firearm safety training in our schools. Conduct mass casualty exercises at cross all agencies. Increase the number of school resource officers and counselors in the schools to increase odds in preventing youth from going astray in the first place. Because as this county success grows, so will the bad influence. Hold the parents accountable for their children’s actions. Let’s put our energy, finances and areas that will have positives effects.