

January 10, 2023

Dear Charles County Commissioners,

This letter is written in opposition to Bill 2022-14 "Weapons and Firearms Prohibited on County-Owned or Operated Property." As American citizens the Constitution protects our right to bear arms. Maryland law currently restricts gun owners significantly. Those of us who possess a Wear and Carry Permit have obtained it by paying fees, being fingerprinted and background checked and completing the required training, which includes an emphasis on safety. We have been certified by an instructor and are competent to safely use and carry a firearm. I, for one, received my permit when citing a good and substantial reason was required; I actually have a few.

In seeking to enact this law, you are not only creating multiple difficulties for those who lawfully carry firearms; you are also putting their lives at risk. To be prohibited from carrying a firearm within any county owned or operated property, would necessarily require an ever-changing map showing the restricted areas. It is ridiculous to expect citizens to know where each of these properties are located. Signage would be needed to indicate restricted areas.

When in daily transit, those who lawfully carry firearms are often required to make decisions regarding safe storage within a vehicle, due to unplanned circumstances and emergencies; all governed by various complicated laws and restrictions that must be interpreted and cause great difficulty for those of us who are trying wholeheartedly to follow the law. Firearms are much safer when carried by a person with a permit rather than left locked in a vehicle which could be burglarized.

Have you taken the time to read the Annotated Code of Maryland as it pertains to firearm possession? Instead of copying and pasting verbiage borrowed from another jurisdiction, why don't you consider the possible results on Charles County citizens by enacting such a law? Why aren't you identifying the inconsistencies and issues with the proposed bill? Why don't you go over the pros and cons? If you did, you would see that this bill is both unnecessary and would negatively impact law abiding citizens. Why are the commissioners exempt? Are your lives more important than ours? Why are lawful citizens required to jump through so many hoops to abide by the law, while criminals sit and laugh at all of us because they do not follow any of the rules?

Those with nefarious intent are not concerned about the laws at all. If someone is determined to commit a violent act (which is itself illegal, unless done for the purposes of self-defense) they will not be deterred from criminal behavior by this law. I would argue any place is safer, in general, when permit holders are present with firearms. The more places that are advertised as "gun free zones," the more targets are created for those wishing to harm someone. Most lawfully armed citizens, when put in harm's way by a criminal, would protect themselves, their families and anyone else in the vicinity.

Violence, in any form, is not stopped by creating layers of mindless, unenforceable laws. Evil actions emanate from people's hearts, hence the need for firearm possession for purposes of protection. Firearms are called "great equalizers" for a reason. Many people, including myself, may not have the ability to physically fight someone who wishes to do them harm and may not be able to run away, but with a firearm we stand a fighting chance. Danger abounds; Instead of being passive, I have chosen readiness and action. Stop trying to disarm law abiding citizens. Focus on catching, punishing and reforming criminals and better yet, finding ways to help people avoid that path altogether.

Sincerely,



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