

## Testimony on Expedited Bill 21-22

Councilmembers,

My name is Daniel Sangaree and I'm a Montgomery County resident in Glenmont, a member of my community's home owners' association's board of directors, a married gay man, a registered and voting Democrat, and a Maryland Handgun Wear and Carry permit holder. My firearms training and experience includes handgun training by the Greene County (Missouri) Sheriff's Department as part of my university's criminal justice degree program, competitive handgun shooting as part of the American Criminal Justice Association, years of experience as a concealed weapons permit holder before moving to Maryland, Maryland's Handgun Qualification License training, and Maryland and DC's 16+ hours of concealed handgun permit training. This letter is my testimony in opposition to expedited Bill 21-22 currently under your consideration.

Bill 21-22 proposes to remove the exemption for Maryland handgun permit holders to the county's places of public assembly restrictions. As a permit holder this bill will affect me to a rather extreme degree. It is, in fact, a de facto ban on legal firearm carry throughout the populated areas of the county. Under even the much more objective definitions that existed before Bill 4-21, which this council previously passed, with the exemption removed I will not be able to do any of the following while otherwise legally armed:

- travel more than a block from my home in any direction on foot, Metro rail, or by car
- inspect, as a director, all of the property that is under my HOA's jurisdiction
- shop at my primary grocery store, the Safeway in Wheaton, or almost any of the grocery stores in the area, including: Giant in Aspen Hill, Lidl in Glenmont, Aldi in Glenmont, H-Mart

in Glenmont, Giant in Norbeck, Safeway in Norbeck, Giant in Wheaton, Target in Wheaton, Safeway in Kensington, and so many more.

- walk my dog on his normal route which was chosen entirely for conflict avoidance
- defend myself in my car during a rising trend of violent, armed carjackings in the county that police, by the laws of physics, are unable to defend us from

While I am only speaking for myself, as an HOA board member I have also noted that there are households within my HOA that, due to their proximity to a park, residents won't be able to legally leave their house at all while armed, either walking or by car. Many are likely even unaware that they are affected in this way. This specific scenario applies to many people in the county and that's before applying the vague definitions as provided in Bill 4-21.

The vague definitions for a place of public assembly brought by 4-21 add a truly dystopian lens through which to view this bill. This bill will allow police to arrest anyone who is otherwise legally armed nearly anywhere in the county based purely on the personal discretion and biases of the officer. It takes absolutely zero imagination to figure out exactly how that will be abused and what groups will be victimized by the wide latitude this bill would give police. But just to be absolutely clear, it will be people of color, queer people, and other oppressed minorities that bear the brunt of abuses by police from this just as they bear the brunt of all police abuses. This is exactly why The Black Attorneys of Legal Aid, the Bronx Defenders, and Brooklyn Defender Services, three public-defender groups in New York, filed an amicus brief in support of NY State Rifle and Pistol Association in *NYSRPA v Bruen*. To quote that brief, "virtually all our clients whom New York prosecutes for exercising their Second Amendment right are Black or Hispanic. And that is no accident. New York enacted its firearm licensing requirements to criminalize gun ownership by racial and ethnic minorities. That remains the effect of its enforcement by police and prosecutors today." ("Brief amici curiae of Black Attorneys of Legal Aid, et al. ", 2021)

Which brings me to the biggest problem with this bill. Either the members of this council have never visited a county jail, prison, or other place of incarceration or they came away from it with a wholly different takeaway than I did when I visited jails and prisons as part of my criminal justice program. This bill intends to send upstanding members of our community, vetted by the state police as law abiding and trained, to jail for up to six months for an act with no element of malice and likely an honest mistake or a matter of police/prosecutorial discretion. This result, which is explicitly what this bill demands, is cruel and honestly horrific. This is the exact opposite of criminal justice reform that the Democratic Party has called for over the past multiple decades.

I ask that the members of this council reject this bill which will only serve to criminalize upstanding, and disproportionately minority, members of our community.

Sincerely,



Daniel Sangaree

#### References

“BRIEF OF THE BLACK ATTORNEYS OF LEGAL AID, THE BRONX DEFENDERS, BROOKLYN DEFENDER SERVICES, ET AL. AS AMICI CURIAE IN SUPPORT OF PETITIONERS”, July 2021. Accessible via Supreme Court of the United States website, Docket 20-843.