

Testimony for the Montgomery County Council
July 26, 2022

Expedited Bill 21-22, Weapons—Firearms In or Near Places of Public Assembly
FAVORABLE

To Council President Albornoz and members of the Public Safety Committee,

My name is Jennifer Stein, and I am a long-standing volunteer with Maryland Moms Demand Action. I have lived in Montgomery County since 1995 and currently live in the Town of Chevy Chase. Together with my husband, Michael, we have raised a family here. I am submitting written testimony in support of Expedited Bill 21-22, Weapons—Firearms In or Near Places of Public Assembly.

Gun violence in our country has become a public health crisis of epic proportions. The statistics are so monumental—110 deaths and 200 more injuries every day—it is possible to become numb unless directly affected. But none of us is immune to the scourge of gun violence, which destroys lives, families, and communities. So far, Montgomery County has avoided a mass shooting in a sensitive public space, but this is not a matter of luck. Maryland’s strong concealed carry permitting system was appropriate and necessary for public safety. Meanwhile, Montgomery County is experiencing a rise in gun violence—the last thing our county needs is guns where people gather. And no one should have to worry about gun violence when they take their kids to a playground, to a park, or drop them off at school.

The Supreme Court’s dangerous decision striking down the “proper cause” discretionary requirement to conceal carry a firearm has already increased the risk of tragic mass shootings in our community. When permitting systems are weakened and more people may carry concealed weapons into sensitive public spaces, the research shows that deadly violence rises. States with no such discretion in issuing concealed carry permits have homicide rates 11% higher than states like Maryland and New York.

Now that the Supreme Court’s concealed carry decision is the law of the land, Maryland and its local governments must take all reasonable action to protect children and adults from senseless gun violence within its borders. Expedited Bill 21-22, Weapons—Firearms In or Near Places of Public Assembly would be a commonsense, constitutional measure to help ensure public safety in the post-*Bruen* era. Montgomery County has the power under Maryland state law to regulate firearms as set forth in Expedited Bill 21-22. I urge the passage of this life-saving bill.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Stein
State Data Co-Lead
Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America, Maryland Chapter