

To the members of the council,

My name is Anthony Nelson, and I have been a resident of Montgomery county since roughly 2013. I previously lived in Prince George's County where I experienced more than my fair share of crime directly or indirectly including robbery, home break-ins, and car theft. That was precisely part of my desire to move out to an area that for most of my life, I considered to be relatively low in crime and safe.

As a lifelong resident of Maryland, it has been a long frustrating road for the issue of self-defense and Maryland's views to the methods in which one chooses to defend themselves. For my entire adult life, I have had to accept lawfully, that I am not able to defend myself or my family to the best of my ability due to what many politician's refer to as "common-sense gun legislation." Up until July 5, 2022, Maryland has remained a "may issue" state in regards to the issuance of any type of permit to carry citing "good and substantial" reasoning which to most, felt like an arbitrary term that applied to a very small population. The recent Supreme Court Ruling and subsequent statement from Gov. Hogan suspending the "good and substantial" clause was an exciting time for many Marylanders and a restoration of a long restricted constitutional right as well as the "unalienable right" to Life mentioned in the countries founding document. A right that governments were instituted to secure.

Despite the legislation that Maryland has upheld for all these years, touting some of the strictest gun laws on the books in the country, Maryland has remained competitive in the category of "most homicides by state" category. This can be partly contributed to Maryland's unwillingness to prosecute criminals who are in turn released and commit more heinous crimes; as well as enforce laws that are already on the books. As recent as June, Deputy First Class Glenn Hilliard was murdered by a man who should have been previously locked-up for being convicted of armed robbery. I would like to note that at the time of the armed robbery and at the time of the murder of Deputy Hilliard, the suspect was under the age of legal handgun ownership in the state of Maryland. At the time of this letter, just one week ago, a 15-year-old squeegee worker in Baltimore shot and killed a bat-wielding man in Baltimore. While all of the details of the case may never all be known, we know that a 15-year old boy was armed and it was stated that most of the boys who are on these corners providing this service are as well. This stands to show that no matter what laws are on the books, criminals will always willfully disobey them, and it is always the law-abiding citizen who is left at a disadvantage. This legislation is not aimed at keeping criminals from bringing guns into "public areas," because we all know that criminals will do it no matter what the law says. What we do know for sure is that criminals don't look for resistance or a fight, they look for victims and easy targets. This bill only creates more of the latter.

Driving into my home city of Olney now, there are road signs warning of car jackings. A January 2022 WTOP article titled "Homicides, carjackings up in Montgomery County" is a constant lingering thought in my head when I come to a stop light with my 3 small children who are under the age of 6 and wife all in the vehicle. The article denotes an 88% rise in homicides and 72% increase in carjackings. Average law-abiding citizens are tired of being a statistic. Having more trained citizens looking to protect themselves and their families suddenly becoming criminals because of a law based on no data is the exact reason why crime statistics in this county will continue to rise if this unconstitutional bill is passed.

Members of this council have stated that Marylanders want this bill passed; however I think it can be reasonably argued by the influx of applications for wear and carry permits, as well as the current backlog

of people trying to sign up for the class, is quite representative of the climate. This bill, while directly in opposition to the supreme court ruling and purpose for the ruling in the first place, stands to turn law-abiding citizens who took the time to get the training and spent upwards of \$1000 in total to exercise a constitutional right into criminals.

I strongly urge the council to rescind this bill as it is in opposition to the recent supreme court ruling, as well as the basic human rights we all have, to defend ourselves and our families.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,

Anthony Nelson