

I would like to submit brief testimony in opposition to Expedited Bill 21-22, Weapons - Firearms In or Near Places of Public Assembly. I have four reasons for opposing this legislation:

It will not make me and my family less susceptible to violent crime.

While the legislation's intended purpose is to improve safety and protect county residents from violent offenders, I fail to see how this provision does that. Literally, all Montgomery County residents, including legally armed residents deemed responsible by the state police, will be more vulnerable to violent crime. Criminals will know they have the tactical advantage when pursuing targets in places of public gatherings such as bus stops, train stations, parks and shopping center parking lots. I found it ironic this bill was announced the same day county police announced the arrest of district residents performing armed robbery of MontCo residents waiting at bus stops. This type of crime will continue.

The legislation will place a greater burden on police officers

At a time when police officers are retiring at record paces and the number of recruits failing to meet those losses, current officers will be forced to bear a greater burden to prevent and respond to crimes, particularly violent crime, before and when they occur. As a native New Yorker, I have personally experienced moments of tranquillity turn to chaos in a matter of seconds. The time chaos ensues to the time when the police arrive seems like an eternity whether it is 30 seconds or three minutes. The truth is every individual is their own first responder.

The legislation will place greater liability costs on businesses

Businesses will bear additional costs to ensure occupants to their businesses are safe from criminal elements. Liability and security

insurance will increase as businesses look to protect themselves from lawsuits stemming from crimes committed on their premises. Public officials need to reevaluate their objective and not target law abiding citizens.

It appears to me this legislation is not addressing the problem it is trying to solve: gun-related crime.

There is a process in place to ensure firearms are not in the hands of law abiding citizens who may not be suitable for owning firearms; are criminals looking to circumvent the law, and/or are individual with emotional or mental health issues. The county needs to trust this process and not disarmed county residents the state police deem responsible to legally own and carry firearms. There are also many laws in place designed to prevent the illegal purchase, use and distribution of firearms. Elected officials must trust the process and laws in place and only make changes which ensure law abiding citizens are protected not punished.

Thank you.