

Montgomery County Council
Council Office Building
100 Maryland Avenue, 6th Floor
Rockville, MD 20850

July 25, 2022

Re: OPPOSE Bill 21-22, Weapons – Firearms In or Near Places of Public Assembly.

Esteemed Council Members:

I am writing you as a Maryland native, a Montgomery County business owner, and a registered Montgomery County voter to oppose Bill 21-22, Weapons – Firearms In or Near Places of Public Assembly. I am also a Maryland Wear and Carry permit holder, earned with a substantial amount of background checks and training. While I understand your intent is to protect the lives of innocent people, this bill is vague and will create confusion for law-abiding citizens with carry permits.

Under this proposed bill, there is no definition of “places of public assembly,” which can be construed as something as simple as a grocery store or bank without context. Since many of us with carry permits are frequently traveling from work and the primary purpose of the permit is to keep us safe in the disposition of our duties as a business owner while banking or traveling to and from our home, this vague wording places us at risk for breaking the law within the county where Maryland has provided us the right to protect our lives.

For instance, the specific addition of school parking lots places many of us at risk as we travel home from work while legally carrying a firearm. With the current cost of gasoline, it is ridiculous to expect us to go miles out of our way to return home.

The most substantial reason for my opposition to this bill is that it creates a patchwork regulation within the state of Maryland, which creates a challenging structure for law-abiding citizens of Montgomery County and Maryland to comply. This would also set a precedent where law-abiding citizens are placed at risk for prosecution from laws within a smaller jurisdiction without any type of signage to identify that legal firearm carrying is prohibited. It is challenging enough to recall which states have which specific laws and which areas are restricted.

In addition, there has been an inadequate amount of time since Bill 21-22 was introduced and the hearing date of July 26, 2022. Many Montgomery County residents are unaware of the aforementioned bill and have not had an opportunity to read or speak their affirmation or opposition to it. This quick vote seems underhanded and sneaky, something I am certain none of you wishes to be, particularly with the upcoming election.

Please oppose this bill and let us address gun violence from root cause mitigation. I would be honored to help with supporting the council with data and statistics on root cause mitigation and public awareness.

Sincerely,

Rachel King