2023 LEGISLATIVE WRAP UP

Gun Safety Policy in Annapolis

The 2023 Maryland General Assembly Legislative Session ended on Monday, April 10. This first session since Governor Wes Moore took office was also the first since the United States Supreme Court handed down its June 2022 NYSR&P v. Bruen decision. The Bruen ruling impacted Maryland’s long-standing wear and carry permitting process, weakening the standards and allowing more guns in public. MPGV testified in 14 bill hearings and supported 9 pieces of legislation.

In the aftermath of Bruen, Maryland State Police received a significant spike in applications and granted 600% more permits in 2022 than the prior year. The increase of applications and resultant permits has continued through 2023. Substantial data shows that when states loosen permitting restrictions, crime rates rise by 13-15% over the first ten years. Concerned with the implications for Maryland from this alteration of Second Amendment jurisprudence, it was necessary to take a closer look at who gets to carry firearms in public spaces, and which public spaces are inappropriate.

In addition, data continues to show that our young people are being heavily impacted by gun violence. Firearms are the number one cause of death of youth in America and in Maryland. Alarmed by this trend for years, MPGV again prioritized the passage of Child Access Prevention legislation requiring gun owners to responsibly secure their firearms from youth and to be held accountable when they do not.

**Guns in Public Spaces**

**SBI** – Passed the General Assembly on the final day of session and is on the way to the Governor’s desk. Sometimes referred to as the Sensitive Places bill, SBI enumerates where public carry permit holders can carry their firearms. Among the places where firearms are not allowed are: certain areas for children and vulnerable individuals, government buildings, polling places, and places that are licensed to sell or dispense alcohol or cannabis for on-site consumption. The presumption will be that permit holders must receive express permission from private property owners before carrying a firearm onto a property. Public carry holders must also now conceal their firearms when carrying unless they are included in an exempted class.

**Carry Permitting & Training**

**HB824** – Passed the General Assembly and is on the way to the Governor’s desk. Designed to strengthen the public carry permitting process, this legislation ensures proper vetting in order to prohibit applicants who have demonstrated a propensity for violence or significantly irresponsible behaviors from public carry. The existing system caught some issues but other concerns were not being captured. The bill also increases training requirements to carry and adjusts the fees to help cover part of the costs incurred by the state to issue permits.

**Jaelynn’s Law**

SB858/HB307 Firearm Safety – Storage Requirements and Youth Suicide Prevention passed both chambers and is on the governor for signature! This new law will require gun owners to secure their regulated firearms from youth through age 17; provides for a loss of second amendment rights if convicted of either two storage violations or a single storage violation where someone is harmed; and creates education around safe storage and youth suicide prevention.

**Data Collection**

**SBI/HB3** – Passed and is on the way to the Governor’s desk. This requires the Maryland State Police to collect data on firearms surrendered pursuant to final protective orders. Maryland already has strong laws related to the relinquishment of firearms, but the methods by which jurisdictions implement this vary widely, with differing impacts. The data will help illuminate the effectiveness and any issues around the state.

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**Continuing Efforts**

**Gun Industry Liability**
SB113/HB259 – Civil Actions – Public Nuisances – Firearms Industry Members (Gun Industry Accountability Act of 2023). The gun industry is unique in this country in having special protection from lawsuits through the federal Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act. This legislation would seek to carve out an allowable state cause of action for bad actors in the gun industry to be held accountable for their misdeeds. The bill did not progress out of committee this year. Watch for this to be a high priority for MPGV next year.

**Do Not Sell List**
SB159/HB162 – Firearms – Maryland Voluntary Do Not Sell Firearm Registry – Establishment. The purpose of this legislation was for people who struggle with their mental health to voluntarily put themselves on a do not sell list so that they would be unable to easily obtain a firearm in a possible future moment of crisis. The bill cleared the House with a 96-36 vote but did not make it out of the Senate’s Judicial Proceedings Committee.

**Violence Intervention & Prevention Program Funding**
SB598 – Maryland Violence Intervention and Prevention Program (VIPP) Fund – Appropriation. This legislation sought to increase the funding of the annual appropriation that the Governor is required to include in the budget bill for the Maryland VIPP Fund. The legislation did not progress. VIPPs and their funding are a critical focus of MPGV and we will be exploring other paths to supporting these programs in the coming months.

**Victim Compensation**
SB788/HB861 – Criminal Procedure – Victim Compensation – Alternations. Inequities in the current system of victim compensation often deny victims of gun violence access to resources allowed to other crime victims. These critical resources are fundamental in curbing the cycles of gun violence that plague communities with lesser means. This year’s legislation did not pass out of committee, however, we anticipate it coming back for 2024.

**2025 Session Heroes**

- **Sen. Jeff Waldstreicher**
  SB1 & SB113/HB259
- **Sen. Will Smith**
  SB858/HB307
- **Del. Sandy Bartlett**
  SB858/HB307 & SB185/HB3
- **Del. Luke Clippinger**
  HB824
- **Del. Jared Solomon**
  HB515
- **Del. David Moon**
  SB159/HB162
- **Sen. Shelly Hettleman**
  SB159/HB162
- **Del. Aaron Kaufman**
  For getting Maryland Shall Issue to say on the record that they support Jaelynn’s Law and for making a motion on the House floor to end the debate and move SB1 to a final vote on Sine Die
- **Sam Levy**
  Everytown for Gun Safety
- **Tanya Schardt**
  Brady United
- **David Pucino**
  Giffords
- **Melissa Ladd**
  And her entire Moms Demand Action Army
- **Kristin & Mike Song**
  For their efforts on Jaelynn’s Law and similar efforts nationwide (Ethan’s Law)
- **Robyn Elliott**
  MPGV lobbyist

And the countless advocates, survivors, and supporters of gun violence prevention that made this year’s successes possible

**MPGV THANKS YOU ALL!**