



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

April 15, 2020

The Honorable Larry Hogan
100 State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Governor Hogan,

We applaud your decision last month to require the closure of Maryland's non-essential businesses by Executive Order. Since you have since designated firearms stores as essential businesses, we hope you will take measures to ensure operators of those stores are complying with social distancing recommendations, as operators of so many grocers and other essential businesses have already done. More specifically, we are concerned about the evidence of long lines in and outside crowded stores and about customers touching inventory items and inadvertently spreading disease.

During this time when our law enforcement resources are strained, it must be incumbent upon these operators to prioritize public safety as well. Lack of accountability with our gun policies in a time of upheaval can have deadly consequences for individuals who are at higher risk during times of serious social isolation, particularly those experiencing domestic violence and/or mental health crises, and who might not access support systems that would be available during normal circumstances.


Many businesses in the state have received industry-specific guidance for continuing operations while prioritizing public health and safety. What guidance has been provided to firearms dealers regarding compliance with the CDC's social distancing recommendations? How has this guidance been issued, and where is it published? In addition, what are the security requirements for firearms stores? Is there any mandate for additional security staffing, both during- and off-business hours?

Additionally, we are concerned about the rapid increase in background check requests and the state's ability to accommodate this surge. With the state's judicial operations shuttered, the courts have diminished ability to conduct these background checks. If the background check takes more than the allotted seven day period as a result of increased demand and reduced administrative

capacity, will the person who applied for the firearm be automatically approved? We urge you to extend the background check period to account for the possible delay in processing, ensuring that courts and law enforcement have sufficient time to update the NICS system and process requests.

We look forward to receiving your responses to the above questions and we thank you for all that you have done to keep Marylanders safe and healthy during these scary, uncertain times.

Sincerely,



Sidney Katz
President



Tom Hucker
Vice President



Gabe Albornoz
Councilmember At-Large



Evan Glass
Councilmember At-Large



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Councilmember At-Large



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Barbara Noveau
Executive Director, Do the Most Good MoCo