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P.O. Box 2035
Columbia, MD 21045

March 12, 2002

SB 379 - Declaration of Rights - The Right to Keep and Bear Arms

The Honorable Walter M. Baker
Chairman, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 2 East Wing
11 Bladen St.
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

Dear Chairman Baker,

The Maryland Citizens Defense League strongly SUPPORTS SB 379.

We believe that the Maryland Constitution already incorporates the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution by reference. However, as is the case with many other well-established things, the Attorney General and other Democrats in power in Maryland believe otherwise. For example, the Maryland Secretary of State recently testified in this Legislature that he does not think that the Second Amendment permits citizens to have firearms. He said that notwithstanding the findings in the recent Federal Emerson that the Second Amendment refers to AN INDIVIDUAL RIGHT OF CITIZENS. That position is also supported by recent changes in viewpoints by many even liberal academic scholars of the U.S. Constitution.

So in order to preclude future renegade Maryland Governors and Attorney Generals from jerking around law-abiding citizens who have or want to purchase firearms, SB 379 should be passed. Let the voters of Maryland speak as to whether the Constitution of Maryland should be amended. Indeed, this Committee will by its vote on SB 379 speak as to what it believes and to whether it trusts Maryland citizens to own firearms for self defense. I need not once again remind you of the terrible crime rates in Maryland and the need of citizens, especially minority ones in Baltimore City and P.G. County, to be able to own and carry firearms with which to defend themselves. But in case you do not remember, I've put that information on the reverse side hereof.

Sincerely, and angrily,

Robert M. T. Wilson
For the Legislative Committee

Attachment (reverse side) Maryland Crime Statistics
Attachment 2 - American Legion Resolution 335

Note About Maryland Crime Rates Generally. The most accurate, bottom-line gauge of how Maryland is doing in its crime control efforts is to compare Maryland's crime rates with those of other states. When all the smoke and mirror statements and false data have been cast aside, these comparative rates give one a valid basic assessment of the crime situation in Maryland vs. the crime situation in other states. As one may readily see, Maryland's relative crime situation is horrific and has been growing, in spite of misleading statements to the contrary by Gov. Glendening, Lt. Gov Townsend, Colonel Mitchell of the Maryland State police, and many other officials. Those officials prefer to compare Maryland's situation this year to Maryland's situation last year when that comparison is convenient. **The above proves that Maryland's citizens are suffering violent crimes at rates greater than the citizens of most all the other 49 states. This is proven beyond the shadow of a doubt.**

Maryland Crime Rates vs. Other States*

Year	Homicides	Violent Crimes	Robbery
1992	6	4	2
1993	5	6	2
1994	8	8	2
1995	4	4	1
1996	3	3	1
1997	6	6	1
1998	4	5	1
1999	4	4	1
2000	3	3	1

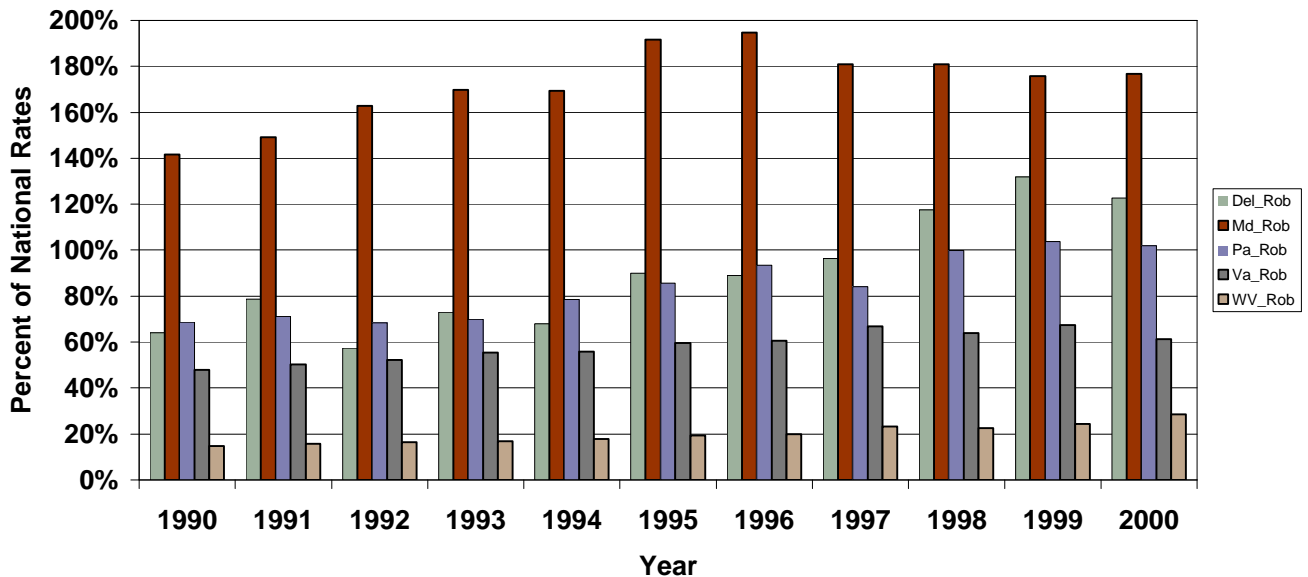
*Source: FBI's annual Uniform Crime Reports (UCR).

This chart shows the annual ranking of Maryland's rates of crime vs. the crime rates of all other states.

For example, Maryland citizens have a higher rate of being robbed than the citizens of any other state - and this has been the case for every year since 1995 as reported by the FBI. The rates of homicides and violent crime in Maryland are worse than in 47 of the other states.

The below shows Maryland's Robbery rate as a percent of the national robbery rate. Also, shown are similar data on our surrounding neighboring states

Maryland Robbery Compared to Neighboring States



Notice that Maryland's robbery rate has exceeded national rates by 50% for a decade and is almost THREE times that of Virginia. Also, Maryland's rate is nearly 9 times that of West Virginia, and 50% higher than Pennsylvania. None of our neighboring states show as much violence as Maryland. Maryland performs almost as poorly on other violent crime measures.

Concealed Carry Comparisons**

Arrest rates per 1000

Of Washington, DC police officers:	19.0
Of St. Louis police officers:	13.0
Of New York City police officers:	3.0
Of Florida concealed handgun permit holders:	0.9

**Source: "D.C. Police Paying for Hiring Binge" Washington Post 8/28/94 and Memorandum by James T. Moore, Commissioner of Florida's Department of Law Enforcement, to office of the Governor, dated 3/15/95.

~~EIGHTH SECOND NATIONAL CONVENTION~~
OF
THE AMERICAN LEGION
MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN
SEPTEMBER 5, 6, 7, 2000

RESOLUTION NO: 335

**SUBJECT: REAFFIRMATION OF SUPPORT FOR SECOND
 AMENDMENT**

WHEREAS, The Second Amendment to the Constitution of the United States guarantees each law-abiding American citizen the right to keep and bear arms of his or her choice; and

WHEREAS, It is estimated that over 60 million individuals, representing over half of the households in America, have chosen to exercise that right by owning one or more firearms; and

WHEREAS, Gun bans, registration, and licensing of firearms and their owners has had little or no effect in such urban areas in such urban areas such as New York City, California and Washington D.C. and has not prevented violent criminals from obtaining firearms illegally and committing crimes; and

WHEREAS, The restriction of firearms purchases by law-abiding citizens will create a black market in illegal firearms and incur further governmental costs to enforce such restriction; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion reaffirms its recognition that the Second Amendment to the Constitution of the United States guarantees each law-abiding American citizen the right to keep and bear arms; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That the membership of The American Legion urges our nations lawmakers to recognize, as part of their oaths of office, that the Second Amendment guarantees law-abiding citizens the right to keep and bear the arms of their choice, as do the millions of American veterans who have fought, and continue to fight, to preserve those rights, hereby advise the Congress of the United States and the Executive Department to cease and desist any and all efforts to restrict these rights by any legislation or order.