

## MD Lawmakers to Try Again on Controversial Shotgun Restrictions

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**Annapolis, MD** - January 7, 2020 - When the Maryland General Assembly starts on Wednesday, a gun bill that didn't pass last year's session will be one of the top priorities for gun-control advocates in the new session.

House Bill 4 would close a dangerous gap in state law that allows Marylanders to privately sell shotguns and rifles, also known as "long guns," without a background check.

According to Bridget McCullough, Maryland state campaign lead with Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America, the loophole makes it easy for people convicted of violent crimes, who can't legally own guns, to get their hands on a shotgun.

"Right now, we have background checks on every other type of gun or from a licensed dealer," McCullough said. "And so to ensure that Marylanders stay safe, these background checks are the most effective way to keep guns out of the hands of those who are legally prohibited from having them."

Opponents of the bill, including hunters, say long guns are rarely used in homicides and enforcing restrictions on them makes it more difficult for law-abiding gun owners to possess and transfer their private property.

McCullough said Maryland is known for having some of the toughest gun-control laws in the United States and argued the state needs to adopt new measures to remain a leader on the issue.

Despite this, gun lobbyists fought hard against the long-gun bill when it was proposed last year. The original bill had more restrictions on shotgun and rifle purchases, including fingerprinting, and it caused heated debates during the General Assembly.

"It would have required some training and a fingerprinting and a licensing piece too, which would be similar to the handgun qualification license that's currently required," McCullough said.

She said she thinks the stripped-down version of the bill, which just requires background checks, stands a better chance of passing. Giffords Law Center has ranked Maryland fourth in the nation for strong gun laws, behind California, New Jersey and Connecticut.

*-Diane Bernard, Public News Service - MD*

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