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| 1 | IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT |
| 2 | FOR THE DISTRICT OF MARYLAND |
| 3 | |
| 4 | SHAWN J. TARDY, et al. |
| 5 | PLAINTIFFS |
| 6 | VS. CIVIL NO. CCB-13-2841 |
| 7 | MARTIN J. O'MALLEY, in his official capacity as Governor |
| 8 | of the State of Maryland, et al. |
| 9 | DEFENDANTS |
| 10 | |
| 11 | JANE DOE, et al. |
| 12 | PLAINTIFFS |
| 13 | VS. CIVIL NO. CCB-13-2861 |
| 14 | MARTIN J. O'MALLEY, in his official capacity as Governor |
| 15 | of the State of Maryland, et al. |
| 16 | DEFENDANTS |
| 17 | Baltimore, Maryland |
| 18 | October 1, 2013 |
| 19 | |
| 20 | The above-entitled case came on for a Temporary |
| 21 | Restraining Order proceedings before the Honorable |
| 22 | Catherine C. Blake, United States District Judge |
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| 24 | |
| 25 | Gail A. Simpkins, RPR Official Court Reporter |

A P P E A R A N C E S For the Plaintiffs: Tara Sky Woodward, Esquire John Parker Sweeney, Esquire James W. Porter, III, Esquire For the Defendants: Matthew J. Fader, Esquire Dan Friedman, Esquire

PROCEEDINGS

THE CLERK: The matter now pending before this Court is Civil Docket Number CCB-13-2841, Shawn J. Tardy, et al. versus Martin J O'Malley, et al.

Counsel for the plaintiffs, Tara Woodward, John
P. Sweeney and James Porter. Counsel for the
defendants, Matthew Fader and Dan Friedman.

This matter now comes before the Court for the purpose of a temporary restraining order.

THE COURT: All right. Good morning again, everyone. I am ready to hear from you. I have read the papers from both sides. That includes the second case, the handgun licensing case, Doe. I understand from the State's response that they are ready to discuss that today as well today if the plaintiffs want to do that.

Mr. Sweeney.

MR. SWEENEY: May it please the Court, Your Honor, my name is John Parker Sweeney, and I am here representing the plaintiffs.

May I introduce today in the courtroom, we have Shawn Tardy for the plaintiff in the Tardy lawsuit.

We have Carol and Gary Wink also in the Tardy suit and the Doe suit, owners of Wink's Sporting Goods.

We have Steve Schneider, who is the owner of
Atlantic Guns and is the President of Maryland
Licensed Firearms Association, and John Josselyn,
Legislative Vice President for the Associated Gun
Clubs of Baltimore.

THE COURT: All right. Happy to have everybody

THE COURT: All right. Happy to have everybody here.

MR. SWEENEY: Thank you, Your Honor, for making yourself available on such short notice.

Ms. Woodward will address the Tardy motion for a TRO, and then following that I will address the handgun qualification license TRO.

THE COURT: All right.

MS. WOODWARD: Thank you, Your Honor. May I use the podium?

THE COURT: Sure, wherever you are comfortable.

MS. WOODWARD: May it please the Court, Sky Woodward on behalf of the plaintiffs. My colleague, Mr. Sweeney, has introduced them to Your Honor.

For the record, they include Andrew Turner,
Shawn J. Tardy, Matthew Godwin, Wink's Sporting Goods,
Atlantic Guns, Inc., and Association Plaintiffs,
Associated Gun Clubs of Baltimore, Maryland Shall
Issue, Maryland State Rifle and Pistol Association,
the National Shooting Sports Foundation, and the

Maryland Licensed Firearms Dealers Association.

These plaintiffs, Your Honor, come to the Court today as the people of the State of Maryland, the real people, and not the government. In a democracy, the state represents at best a political majority of the people.

When the plaintiffs speak on behalf of enshrined individual rights, particularly those that are disfavored rights, they speak for all of the people, even those who may hate the right and wish its suppression.

The Court performs no more sacred duty than as it sits today, to protect the civil rights of the minority when disfavored by the political will of the majority. Whether that civil right is to marry the person you love, exercise your reproductive rights, or to exercise your Second Amendment rights, to keep and bear arms, it is in that vein that the plaintiffs come today seeking a TRO under Federal Rule 65.

I will address first, Your Honor, that the plaintiffs are likely to succeed on the merits of their claims.

THE COURT: Well, if you wouldn't mind, if you would first address why this lawsuit was not filed until the Friday before the Tuesday on which it was to

take effect.

MS. WOODWARD: The law obviously is set to take effect today, Your Honor. Had the plaintiffs come before the Court prior to the effective date of the Act, we are confident we would have been met with a standing challenge or a ripeness challenge.

Because the law allowed the purchase of the to-be-banned firearms up until yesterday, Your Honor, there is no reason to come before the Court for a law that is only to be in effect as of today.

THE COURT: But you anticipated. You obviously knew that it was going to be coming into effect, and you could have brought this suit, it seems to me.

I mean if you had standing on Friday, then you had standing sometime ago. It would have permitted a much more deliberate consideration of the law than what seems to be possible by filing it as late as you did.

MS. WOODWARD: Well, certainly a deliberate consideration, Your Honor, comes in the form of a preliminary injunction style hearing.

There is nothing in the rules or the law that suggests that the plaintiffs needed to come before this Court or any court prior to the effective date of the Act, and we would have been, to put it in a

certain way, Your Honor, I think damned if we did and damned if we didn't.

Because had we come to the Court as of the signing of the Bill in May, any time between now and then, Your Honor, the plaintiffs or the defendants would have been able to say to the Court they can exercise their right. There is no ban. They have the ability to purchase the things that are to be banned as of October 1. It's only as of today that the infringement of the right will begin, because it is the acquisition of the firearms to be banned that is the exercise of the right that as of today cannot occur.

THE COURT: Okay.

MS. WOODWARD: As to whether plaintiffs are likely to succeed on the merits of their claims, Your Honor, the plaintiffs and the individual association plaintiff members have clear fundamental individual rights under the Second Amendment to the United States Constitution to acquire and possess firearms and ammunition magazines in their home for defense of themselves, their family, and their property.

This is clear under the <u>Heller</u> case. It is clear under the <u>McDonald</u> case, as applied to the states. It is also clear under Fourth Circuit law

under Chester and Masciandaro.

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As of today, as I've noted, that right, the Second Amendment right to keep and bear arms will be infringed as to an entire class of firearms that are in common use by plaintiffs and association members for use in their home.

THE COURT: When you call it an entire class, you're assuming that assault rifles are a class as compared to a subclass?

I mean there are certainly plenty of long guns, rifles and shotguns that are still perfectly legal for your clients to possess.

It appears to me more like a subclass, a limited group of weapons that your clients are not allowed to possess.

MS. WOODWARD: Well, Your Honor --

THE COURT: Acquire. They are not allowed to acquire going forward. Obviously, what they already have they are allowed to keep.

MS. WOODWARD: The list includes 68 to-be-banned firearms, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Uh-huh.

MS. WOODWARD: Whether one considers that class or subclass, it's a still a comprehensive class of a significant number of firearms that are in common use

and are desired to be purchased by law-abiding, responsible Marylanders for the purposes of self-defense and defense of home.

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So whether an entire class or a subclass, these are nonetheless an entire category of weapons to be banned as of today.

Under Heller, under McDonald, under Chester, and Masciandaro, the Court has said that a class of firearms commonly used for defense of home, and if it is banned, that is unconstitutional.

THE COURT: Well, <u>Heller</u>, of course, was talking about handguns, and the Supreme Court made it quite clear that they thought handguns were the preferred weapon for self-defense for various reasons.

Now, you are not challenging, as I understand it, the continuing ban on certain types of assault pistols. This is just directed at the long guns and the magazines.

Let me just be clear about that. Is that correct?

MS. WOODWARD: That is correct vis-a-vis this lawsuit, Your Honor. The Doe lawsuit deals with handguns.

THE COURT: Yes.

MS. WOODWARD: But that's within the licensing

scheme, not the ban, not a ban.

THE COURT: Right. I understand that. But just talking about this case, it's the rifles and the magazines. Of course, as you alluded to, <u>Heller</u> said you can't have a total ban on handguns.

Now what evidence do you have that assault-style long guns and detachable magazines carrying more than ten rounds are ordinarily or commonly used for defense of the home?

MS. WOODWARD: Your Honor, the plaintiffs will proffer that there will be expert testimony that will be provided to the Court initially through declaration, affidavit, and through live testimony, if the Court will entertain it, in a preliminary injunction hearing. There will be testimony of experts that will address the Court's question, that these types of firearms to be banned are in common use.

THE COURT: Uh-huh.

MS. WOODWARD: In fact, one of the declarations presented in support of the TRO by Mr. Schneider has identified for the Court that the types of weapons to be banned are commonly purchased and commonly used.

The second point, Your Honor, on commonly used for defense of home, self and home, we will be able to

proffer that there will be expert testimony on that point as well, Your Honor, that it's not just the handguns that the U.S. Supreme Court in <u>Heller</u> found to be specifically protected and off the table for a state to ban, but that these types of weapons are also the types of weapons that responsible, law-abiding citizens in the State of Maryland would use in defense of home.

There are certain characteristics, Your Honor, of the firearms to be banned that make them more effective for defense of home, and there will be expert testimony and expert proof to support that.

THE COURT: Now I assume some of this would have been presented to the D.C. Circuit in the <u>Heller</u> case, the second <u>Heller</u> case, if you will. Are you going to be able to distinguish your evidence and the result here from what the D.C. Circuit did?

MS. WOODWARD: Yes, Your Honor, we will. We will be able to distinguish between.

We will also be able to demonstrate that the plaintiffs who we have in this case, and the members of association plaintiffs, that these are the types of firearms, these to-be-banned firearms are the types that for their personal self-protection and protection of the home, are the types of firearms that they

desire.

There is nothing in <u>Heller</u>, and there is nothing in <u>McDonald</u>, there is nothing in <u>Chester</u>, or <u>Masciandaro</u>, that restricts the application of the Second Amendment and the right to keep and bear arms to simply handguns. It is an open question, but one that requires strict scrutiny in our estimation as well, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Would you like to tell me why you think strict scrutiny would be applicable to this when we are talking -- again, I invite you to distinguish the D.C. Circuit's decision in Heller.

We are not talking about a ban, as I see it, on an entire class of weapons, and at least at this point, I don't believe there's evidence that they are commonly used for defense of the home. Why wouldn't intermediate scrutiny be the appropriate standard?

MS. WOODWARD: Well, the Fourth Circuit has not, as the State has said, adopted an intermediate scrutiny standard. The <u>Heller</u> case identifies strict scrutiny on a categorical ban of common firearms that are to be used in the home.

The Fourth Circuit --

THE COURT: I'm sorry. Where does the <u>Heller</u> case do that? I thought the Heller --

1 Do you mean the Supreme Court case? 2 MS. WOODWARD: Yes, yes. 3 THE COURT: I guess we should distinguish between the Supreme Court and --4 5 MS. WOODWARD: Yes, the Supreme Court Heller, 6 Your Honor. 7 THE COURT: I thought that they said we don't even need to decide what level of scrutiny applies. 8 9 MS. WOODWARD: Correct, Your Honor. I misspoke. 10 THE COURT: I haven't seen actually -- I 11 certainly have not in this limited time read all the 12 case law out there on this issue, but I haven't 13 actually seen strict scrutiny applied. 14 MS. WOODWARD: In the context of these 15 to-be-banned firearms in this instance. 16 THE COURT: Right. 17 MS. WOODWARD: At least within the Fourth 18 Circuit, Your Honor, that is correct. There has not 19 been an application of a level of scrutiny vis-a-vis 20 these to-be-banned firearms. 21 The State has argued that it would be a lesser 22 standard, that strict scrutiny would not apply. It is 23 our position that the Fourth Circuit, to the extent it 24 has spoken on this, and again, Chester and 2.5 Masciandaro, which I probably continue to butcher --

1 it's a tough one. I'm not sure if the C is hard or 2 it's soft. THE COURT: I know which one you mean. 3 4 MS. WOODWARD: In any event, I presume that Your 5 Honor knows the case of which I speak. 6 THE COURT: I do. 7 MS. WOODWARD: In both of those cases, Your 8 Honor, before the Fourth Circuit, that Court has 9 alluded to the fact that strict scrutiny would apply. 10 In fact, in Masciandaro, the Court said we 11 assume that any law that would burden the fundamental 12 core right of self-defense in the home by a 13 law-abiding citizen would be subject to strict 14 scrutiny. 15 There is nothing that the State has brought 16 before this Court that they have even attempted to 17 justify the ban, a categorical ban under a strict 18 scrutiny standard. And ultimately, the government 19 will bear the burden of proof to justify a ban, and 20 must do so under strict scrutiny, in our estimation, 21 consistent with Fourth Circuit precedent --22 THE COURT: Well, as you --23 MS. WOODWARD: Or even if it's under 24 intermediate scrutiny.

THE COURT: Okay. Because Masciandaro assumes,

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I think, but certainly does not decide, that strict scrutiny would apply. I think that it also said, as I believe you just quoted, that it would apply to any law that burdens the fundamental core right of self-defense.

So we sort of get back to the original question, if the fundamental core right of self-defense is implicated by the particular to-be-banned weapons on this list.

I mean there's at least an argument to be made, and I know that generally courts have tried to avoid making that decision at the first prong, but there is at least an argument to be made that these weapons don't even fall with the protection of the Second Amendment, that they are unusual and dangerous as opposed to common and ordinary.

MS. WOODWARD: If I may address that point, Your Honor, on the unusual and dangerous piece of this?

The defendants have made reference to the Heller, Supreme Court Heller decision, and the Court's discussion of M16 assault rifles, assault weapons. The defendants make much of this in their opposition papers to justify the categorical ban on semiautomatic rifles.

The State doesn't disclose to the Court a

critical difference between an M16 and the semiautomatic rifles that are to banned here under this state law. The defendants attempt to equate the categorical ban of firearms, of the dangerous and unusual type, to be as outside the scope of the Second Amendment.

So to that point, Your Honor, the M16, as referenced in Supreme Court <u>Heller</u>, and as referenced in the State's papers as the type of weapon to be banned, the M16 is a fully automatic, military-only version, which is adapted from a Colt AR-15 that was manufactured over 50 years ago.

The AR-15, which is one of the models of semiautomatic rifles that the defendants have now banned, was developed for the civilian market before its military M16 version was developed.

Just some of the mechanics here, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Uh-huh.

MS. WOODWARD: If you are handling an M16, that firearm will continuously shoot bullets at a high rate of speed until the trigger is released, the gun jams, or it runs out of bullets. That's the M16.

When one operates one of the banned semiautomatic rifles, it's one bullet and only one shot until another is reloaded, and it cannot be shot

until there is another pull of the trigger. There is a mechanical distinction between the M16 assault weapon and an AR-15-style semiautomatic rifle, which is in the category of to be banned.

THE COURT: When you said reloaded, you just mean pulling the trigger again, right?

I mean on the semiautomatic, you don't have to -- you've got a magazine of at least ten rounds.

MS. WOODWARD: Correct, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Okay.

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MS. WOODWARD: That's correct.

A couple more points on these mechanics.

A fully automated M16 can shoot over ten bullets per second. A semiautomatic AR-15 shoots approximately one bullet every two seconds.

Fully automatic weapons have been the subject of regulation since the 1930's. Fully automatic weapons are not in common use for the defense of the home.

The defendants also rely upon a faulty assumption, Your Honor, that the Court's focus should be on keeping banned classes of firearms off the streets and generalized public safety. It is our position, Your Honor, that the only focus of location would be the home, and that these to-be-banned semiautomatic firearms are entirely for the purpose of

self-defense in the home. 1 2 If I may touch upon magazine capacities, Your 3 Honor? 4 THE COURT: Sure. MS. WOODWARD: The defendants have 5 6 mischaracterized the law as banning the possession of 7 magazines holding more than ten rounds. The law in 8 fact is that one can possess. One simply cannot 9 acquire. 10 The State also states that firearm dealers would 11 be able to simply alter the magazines to hold less 12 than ten rounds, but that is not accurate. The 13 firearm dealers are not able to simply alter magazines 14 to hold less than ten. 15 The State does not address the critical fact 16 that we have put forth to the Court, which is that the 17 magazines in excess of ten rounds are necessary for 18 our individual plaintiffs and individual members of 19 associations to use their firearms at home. 20 THE COURT: Now there has been a 20-round limit 21 in place for sometime; is that correct? MS. WOODWARD: Yes. It is a 30 round maximum, 22

23 20 round, yes, Your Honor, 20 round -24 THE COURT: Do you think that's unconstitutional?
25 MS. WOODWARD: We are not challenging that

today, Your Honor. We are challenging this law which would limit to ten rounds per magazine.

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Again, we will have expert testimony, as well as the testimony of our plaintiffs, that the limitation of a ten-round capacity essentially for individuals makes the use of the firearm --

It essentially prevents the use of the firearm in a way to defend one's self against a surprise attack or any attack in the home.

Your Honor, if we look to $\underline{\text{Heller}}$, Supreme Court Heller, it is instructive.

The District of Columbia's law required that a handgun be kept inoperable, and the Supreme Court deemed that an unconstitutional requirement, because it made it impossible for citizens to use that firearm for self-defense. Rendering it inoperable meant it was of no use.

Individual plaintiffs and association

plaintiffs, Your Honor, have the same situation as it

relates to limitations of magazine capacities. As the

affidavit or declarations demonstrate, and as would be

demonstrated in an injunction hearing, Your Honor,

there would be testimony to show that there are

physical limitations of the plaintiffs that make

magazines in excess of ten rounds useful and necessary

to exercise the fundamental right of that firearm in the home.

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THE COURT: As I recall, that depends in part on your first argument, that the bullets that are going to be fired, many of them will miss their intended target, that it is very hard to be accurate in firing these bullets and, therefore, one needs to be able to fire more, which to me raises a question of what unintended targets are all those extra bullets going to hit?

MS. WOODWARD: Well, Your Honor, the instance that we are focused on is the defense of self in one's home. There are any number of scenarios that could play out, but a very specific one to your concern of where do the bullets go, Your Honor, we are talking about defensive situations of a law-abiding, responsible citizen in one's home, protecting the home, protecting one's self against an intruder, against a criminal.

We are not talking about an instance where there is gunfire in the streets, where there is activity outside the home. It is the ability of an individual to exercise that right, and to be able to do so effectively.

Our plaintiffs and members of association

plaintiffs are in positions, Your Honor, because of physical limitations to desire and to demonstrate that magazines in excess of ten are necessary for them to be able to use the firearms for self-protection and defense of home.

THE COURT: But you're not asking that only individuals with similar disabilities be allowed to have 20 rounds or higher magazines.

MS. WOODWARD: We are not limiting this, Your Honor, to individuals with physical limitations. We have identified for Your Honor individuals with such limitations.

THE COURT: Right.

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MS. WOODWARD: And it is not to the exclusion of other law-abiding, responsible Maryland citizens to have the continued access to magazines in excess of ten rounds.

Your Honor, the plaintiffs have also, on the counts that we have brought to the Court, and again, on the likelihood of success on the merits, we have also brought a claim under the Equal Protection Clause.

The ban unfairly favors retired law enforcement officers.

THE COURT: What's the suspect classification,

suspect category?

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MS. WOODWARD: Well, again, Your Honor, we have to start with the premise of Second Amendment applies, fundamental right, fundamental right to keep and bear arms of the type to be banned, and what the State has done is said that one class of citizens, law enforcement officers and retired law enforcement officers, will be able to continue to have access to these to-be-banned firearms. Non-law enforcement officers will not as of today.

THE COURT: So it essentially is still a Second Amendment right, isn't it, not an equal protection challenge?

MS. WOODWARD: It is a Second Amendment right,
Your Honor. Our argument is that the State unfairly
and unconstitutionally favors one segment of the
population over another segment of the population.

There is no distinction, Your Honor, between a retired law enforcement agent, a law enforcement officer needing the protection of these types of to-be-banned firearms in one's home for self-protection compared to another citizen of the State of Maryland.

There is no distinction between who would need that in a time of attack in one's home, which is what

our point is vis-a-vis law enforcement officers compared to the citizens of Maryland.

We also challenge on vagueness of the Act, Your Honor, and this is essentially the copycat provision of the law.

The State has responded by suggesting that there is Office of the Attorney General guidance that says a similarity between the internal components and a function of the firearms in question is not vague.

The defendants translate this in other words to say an unlisted weapon must have interchangeable internal parts with the listed weapon to qualify as a copy, not merely a similar appearance.

That doesn't help. The State has offered an Attorney General's Opinion, but that is not in the law, and there are real questions, Your Honor, as to whether or not law-abiding, responsible citizens of Maryland actually know what these copycat weapons are.

It is not to be left --

THE COURT: I'm sorry. Just let me understand.

The copycat provisions of this new law, are they different from what has been in effect?

I mean obviously most of these assault rifles have been listed and regulated for sometime. The copycat provision, is that new? Did something change?

MS. WOODWARD: That is a new provision, Your
Honor, that a firearm that's a copycat of a previously
restricted is now banned. But it is that point, Your
Honor, that is where the challenge lies, because one
cannot distinguish between these firearms as an
average, law-abiding responsible citizen of Maryland.

So one does not know if there's an attempt to purchase a copycat of a banned or not. It's too vague for the citizens to be able to know where there will be criminal penalties, and it is likewise challenging for the dealers, Your Honor, to be able to assess their sales in light of the vagueness of the copycat provisions.

THE COURT: Obviously you cited general case law on vagueness. Are you aware of this particular issue of vagueness being applied or resolved or ruled on in any other case applicable to copycat weapons?

Is there anything similar to what you are presenting to me now, any court ruling that you know of so far?

MS. WOODWARD: I don't have anything that comes to the ready, Your Honor. If I may take a --

THE COURT: Well, there may not be any. I don't know.

MS. WOODWARD: Right, right.

THE COURT: I mean I'm asking you.

MS. WOODWARD: Right.

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THE COURT: May we can get to that later.

MS. WOODWARD: Your Honor, I was going to move from likelihood of success on the merits to balance of equities and the other factors of <u>Winter</u>, the requirements of Winter in a TRO.

THE COURT: Sure.

MS. WOODWARD: The balance of equities favors maintaining the status quo, Your Honor.

The defendants' enforcement of these unconstitutional provisions of the Act will irreparably injure plaintiffs' fundamental constitutional rights insofar as the plaintiffs will be unable to acquire and possess these certain commonly used firearms and standard-issued magazines for the purpose of defending themselves in their homes, and that is as of today.

This does potentially expose the individual plaintiffs and the individual members of the association plaintiffs to a risk of injury, perhaps even death, should a defensive need for a firearm arise or criminal prosecution should occur should they decide to exercise this fundamental constitutional right, despite the Act's provisions.

The benefits to the plaintiffs in obtaining a temporary restraining order, which would enable the plaintiffs to continue to exercise this fundamental right to purchase and keep these commonly used firearms for purposes of self-defense, greatly outweighs any potential harm to the defendants that would result from the granting of a TRO.

THE COURT: Now let me ask you, in this case, and again, we are not talking about Doe at the moment, if I recall correctly from the affidavits, most of your clients, the individual ones, that would want them for the home already have a number of these kind of to-be-banned weapons, and they are not being precluded from keeping those, as best I understand.

MS. WOODWARD: There's no preclusion on the keeping, Your Honor. But there's also no rationing of the right within <u>Heller</u>, or any of the Fourth Circuit case law, to suggest that by the mere ownership of one available firearm means that one does not have the constitutional right to secure another.

THE COURT: But if you are talking about likelihood of harm and balancing of the equities, and the need to have these weapons for self-defense in the home, they have that ability now with the weapons that they've got.

MS. WOODWARD: The individual plaintiffs, as part of this complaint, that is correct, Your Honor.

The association plaintiffs, the individual members of association plaintiffs, of which there are potentially 8,000 of which we know in the State of Maryland, also are affected by this ban, the to-be-banned firearms.

The possibility that a firearm that one currently has in one's home being rendered inoperable, broken, a failure of some type, these plaintiffs, although there may be firearms in their homes at this time, they will be prevented from acquiring the types of firearms that they have previously chosen, and would choose again, for defense of self in the home.

So I appreciate Your Honor's point that at least as to the individual plaintiffs who are before Your Honor on this motion have access, and may continue to have in their home, but it doesn't mean that the right is restricted simply because you already possess.

Again, for the purposes of self-defense, the desire to acquire new is a valid choice in this instance, Your Honor.

The public interest that the State puts forth, social science evidence that suggests that the types of firearms to be banned are used in an overwhelming

number of crimes, that social science evidence, Your Honor, the plaintiffs will be able to demonstrate that that evidence will show that it's less than three percent of crimes that these to-be-banned firearms are involved in.

For what it's worth, Your Honor, the State's attempt to put forth its social science evidence on this point, they suggest that it is only under a rational basis review or at most, intermediate scrutiny. But again, our argument is we are looking at these issues under strict scrutiny, and the State's burden is much higher than the mere introduction of social science evidence, as they have done.

The balance of equities, Your Honor, still on that point, there is a recent case by Judge Garbis in this district, PJK Food Service Corp. v Panache

Cuisine, 2013 U.S. District LEXIS 50028 at 2 and 3.

It was a 2013 case by Judge Garbis.

The Court stated that the balance of equities can include the courts considering, one, any irreparable harm that would be sustained by plaintiff if a TRO turns out to be erroneously denied against, two, any irreparable harm that would be sustained by the defendant if a preliminary injunction or TRO turns out to be erroneously granted.

So with that construct, Your Honor, I would also point the Court to Chase v. Town of Ocean City, also District of Maryland, at 825 F.Supp.2d 599.

In that case, Your Honor, there was a challenge to a city ordinance that threatened the plaintiffs with fines for exercising a First Amendment right.

Ordinarily, such a threatened injury to plaintiff will easily outweigh whatever burden the injunction may impose because the government is in no way harmed by the issuance of an injunction that prevents the State from enforcing unconstitutional restrictions.

That Town of Ocean City case obviously was within the context of the First Amendment. We would submit to Your Honor that the Fourth Circuit case of Chester would liken the Second Amendment fundamental right to bear arms with the First Amendment free speech right, and that the Court could look to First Amendment context and find it equally applicable to the case here, and that in this instance, Your Honor, the State does not have an interest in the enforcement of an unconstitutional regulation.

Our plaintiffs, on the other hand, Your Honor, have a daily violation of constitutional rights that outweighs the government's purported interest. As we move into public interest supporting a TRO, obviously

those two factors, we can kind of morph in and out of the two of them.

But moving to the more specific on public interest, it is our position, Your Honor, that a TRO is necessary to preserve the status quo of the plaintiffs' right to acquire these certain commonly used firearms and magazines for self-defense in the home pending this Court's determination of whether to grant a preliminary injunction.

The granting of the plaintiffs' request for a TRO would allow both plaintiffs and defendants an opportunity to fully brief this issue at the preliminary injunction stage. But as I said a moment ago, the public has no interest in the enforcement of an unconstitutional law.

The public interest is best served by granting our requested TRO because it would ensure that the defendants do not impermissibly prevent law-abiding, responsible citizens from exercising a fundamental right to acquire and possess commonly used firearms in their homes for self-defense.

I would note, Your Honor, that if the public interest is so strong in banning these firearms and magazines as of today, why was it not so strong as to require an immediate ban earlier this year?

The General Assembly passed this Act on April 4th. Defendant O'Malley signed the Act on May 16th. The State has identified nothing in the interim that suggests that the public is any more at risk today than they were yesterday.

THE COURT: Isn't it fairly common to give the public some time to adjust to a new law? I mean are you complaining that there was not time between April and October for folks to make plans, perhaps acquire additional weapons, perhaps file a lawsuit earlier?

MS. WOODWARD: That is not our point, Your Honor. Our point is, as it relates to the State's argument that it is in the public interest to deny a TRO today, our point is if it is in the public interest to deny the TRO such that the to-be-banned firearms -- such that the firearms ban goes into effect today, and the limitation on magazine capacities goes into effect today, why is today any more of a risk to public safety than was yesterday?

The State has not been able to demonstrate, has not refuted that particular point, that yesterday is any different from today.

To the point of irreparable harm, Your Honor, plaintiffs will suffer irreparable harm without a TRO.

At the very heart of this, Your Honor, is a

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fundamental constitutional right. To be able to exercise that fundamental constitutional, enumerated right, one must be able to purchase a firearm of choice for use in the home that is in common use, and is not dangerous and unusual. It is that fundamental right that we are here on today.

A fundamental right is no right at all if a restraint on its exercise cannot be addressed by the Court the day of its implementation.

THE COURT: I'm going to need to ask you to wrap up so I have time for the rest of the arguments.

Thanks.

MS. WOODWARD: I am concluding, Your Honor.

Your Honor has already pointed out some of the arguments that actually the State had made in its opposition papers, which was that the individuals perhaps already own a firearm for self-defense.

Again, we submit that there is no rationing of the right available to the defendants.

This Court has the jurisdiction to enter a TRO.

The defendants don't dispute that there is a

constitutional right of individual business and member associations.

Plaintiffs, they do not dispute that beginning today the plaintiffs will be unable to acquire and

possess in their homes for self-protection certain commonly used firearms that will be banned, and the defendants have pointed to no adequate remedy at law by which the plaintiffs may exercise their rights in the absence of equitable relief from this Court.

Thank you, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Thank you very much. I appreciate it.

Mr. Fader.

MR. FADER: Good morning. May it please the Court.

By enacting Chapter 427 of the 2013 laws of Maryland, the General Assembly created a comprehensive measure to stem gun violence in Maryland. Two of the provisions that were critical in Chapter 427 were the provisions that are at issue in the Tardy case, a ban on the future purchase of assault weapons, and a ban on the future purchase of high-capacity magazines.

Through a lot of evidence that was presented to the General Assembly, the General Assembly determined that the public interest of the State of Maryland was best served by banning these very dangerous weapons that have led to significant — that have led to mass shootings and other things that the General Assembly was very concerned about.

THE COURT: On that point, the evidence that was presented to the General Assembly, have you given me a comprehensive set of that in your memorandum response so far?

There were a few -- there were some exhibits attached, and you did refer to some testimony, but I'm not sure if I've got sort of, as of yet, a full picture of what evidence was presented to the General Assembly and whether it made any specific findings about this law.

MR. FADER: I don't believe we've given you a comprehensive set. As I understand it, the General Assembly did not make specific findings with respect to this law. It's the unusual case in which the General Assembly makes specific findings, and it's the information before it. In fact, I think the Court's review is not limited to the information before the General Assembly.

THE COURT: That's true.

MR. FADER: The Court can consider other evidence as well, and we've cited other evidence, including the evidence relied on by the District of Columbia Court of Appeals in the Heller II case, addressing exactly the same laws that are being challenged in this case before Your Honor.

THE COURT: Right.

MR. FADER: I just diverge for one second because in describing the law with respect to assault weapons, I believe there was some confusion before.

The law with respect to assault weapons is accomplished in three ways. One is there's a specific list of specific assault long guns that are covered.

Second, the law also applies to their copies.

THE COURT: Right.

MR. FADER: And third, there's a separate copycat provision. So the copies and copycat are two separate things.

Copies is what was briefed by the two parties.

That's what has been in the law since 1996. That has not changed. There's nothing that has changed with respect to having copies covered.

There's a new provision that is a copycat provision that specifically identifies as copycat weapons weapons that have any two of three different features, being a folding stock, a grenade launcher or a flash suppressor.

That's the only thing that's new. It's not subject to any vagueness challenge that was raised in the complaint. In fact, it seems very straightforward. You have two of those things or you

don't.

The provision that was raised in the complaint by the plaintiffs as a claim of vagueness was the copies provision, which has not changed in the last 17 years.

It is not vague, and even if it were otherwise to be determined that it could be ambiguous, it has been interpreted by the Maryland State Police and the Attorney General to basically be not just a cosmetic similarity, but it has to really be the same gun. It has to have interchangeable parts, and that's not something that there has been any concern raised with the way that has been enforced or lack of understanding of that in the 17 years that it has been in the law.

THE COURT: That was one of my questions. So that has not been challenged since 1996, I mean at least in the form of a lawsuit or any ruling on it by the Court of Appeals, anything?

MR. FADER: Certainly nothing that I am aware of, Your Honor, and I think that provision is not only in Maryland law, but it is a common provision in other states' laws that have banned assault weapons that are in place now as well.

I've just confirmed that there have been no

lawsuits that people who are even more familiar with this than I am are aware of either.

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THE COURT: Okay. As to the copycat weapons, as you said, there has to be two of the three specifically identified features in order for it to be a copycat.

MR. FADER: That's correct, and these are some of the features that make these weapons so dangerous and able to be used in these incidents, some of which we referred to, some of these mass shooting incidents that have occurred in recent years that have been so devastating to society.

One more point of clarification. I think Ms.

Woodward incorrectly said that we identified in our

brief these assault weapons to be banned as the ones

used in most crimes. I don't think that we said that

in our brief. In fact, that's not true. The vast

majority of weapons used in crimes as a general matter

are handguns.

It's the use of assault weapons in a minority of crimes, but in the particularly heinous crimes that give rise to mass casualties that make them so particularly dangerous.

I wanted to clarify that as well.

THE COURT: Sure.

MR. FADER: Assault weapon bans in fact are not new, nor are challenges to their constitutionality.

But what would be completely unprecedented would be a finding that assault weapon bans are unconstitutional.

Your Honor has already referred to the <u>Heller</u> II decision in which the Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia reviewed essentially the same bans, did a careful review of legislative history in those cases, other social science evidence, and concluded they were in fact constitutional.

A California intermediate appellate court in the People v. James decision also reviewed these laws and came to the same conclusion. We cited that case in our brief as well.

And it is the dangerousness of these weapons that are derived from military weapons that separates them from weapons that have been found to be protected, such as handguns, which were the issue in Heller and McDonald, and in other cases that have been before the Court.

On the point that was addressed as far as the similarity between these types of items and the M16, the <u>Heller</u> II decision I think deals with that very explicitly, and that's at page 1263, 670 F.3d 1263, where it dealt with this very issue of the quote from

Heller about M16 rifles.

And looking at evidence that was before the District Court in that case, it noted that the M16 is automatic and the AR-15 is semiautomatic, but said semiautomatics still fire almost as rapidly as automatics, based on evidence that was presented in that case.

The District of Columbia Court of Appeals specifically said it is difficult to draw meaningful distinctions between the AR-15 and the M16 based on that evidence. In fact, the Supreme Court in prior cases also reviewed in that Heller II decision has drawn comparisons between those two.

So by virtue of that, the Supreme Court's reference to seemingly, without the need for further analysis, the right to ban M16's and that kind of military weapon strongly suggests that the same result would be reached in this case.

Turning to the specific factors that the plaintiffs need to prove to demonstrate a right to preliminary injunctive relief, and that applies to preliminary injunction, as well as a temporary restraining order, they, of course, need to satisfy all four of those factors, not just one, two or three.

Taking first the factor of irreparable harm, I

thin it's pretty clear on this record that there is no prospect of irreparable harm to any of the plaintiffs as a result of this lawsuit going into effect.

The delay in bringing this lawsuit has been noted by the Fourth Circuit as an indication of an absence of irreparable harm. The plaintiffs are simply incorrect in stating that they would have been met by a standing challenge if a lawsuit had been filed earlier.

A declaratory judgment action to challenge a law in advance of its effective date is a common thing and helps to avoid last-minute challenges, for people to walk in and have created an emergency of their own.

That itself is a factor that the Fourth Circuit has looked at and said is an indication of the absence of irreparable harm.

Moreover, as has been noted, each of the individual plaintiffs already possesses the weapons and magazines that are at issue, and if it really were essential to self-defense, would have the ability to use them. There simply has been no indication of any irreparable harm at all.

With respect to the likelihood of success on the merits, as to the assault weapons ban, first of all, every court that has looked at the constitutionality

of such ban before, and there haven't been many, but they have universally upheld them.

In fact, the Supreme Court in <u>Heller</u> did not identify a right to any category, a subcategory of weapons that somebody wants for self-defense. The Supreme Court identified an individual right protected by the Second Amendment for self-defense, for self-defense in the home, and in that context, recognized that handguns were unquestionably the category of weapon most used for self-defense within the home. I think the word the Supreme Court used was the overwhelming choice. If handguns are the overwhelming choice, then no other firearm can be the overwhelming choice.

Here, we are dealing with a specific subclass of long guns that is not the overwhelming choice of individuals for self-defense within the home, and is not protected as such, and, therefore, lies outside, at a minimum, outside the core protection of the Second Amendment.

That gets to the scrutiny issue that was being discussed earlier. The Fourth Circuit has very clearly identified that when the burden of a regulation falls on a right that is outside the core right of self-defense within the home, it is subject

not to strict scrutiny, but to intermediate scrutiny.

THE COURT: Assuming for the moment that we are talking about intermediate scrutiny, would you articulate for me just specifically the substantial purpose, the governmental substantial purpose served by this law, and the reasonable fit.

MR. FADER: Certainly, Your Honor.

The substantial purpose is the protection, is public safety from gun violence, and that certainly has been recognized as a compelling governmental interest, including by the Fourth Circuit in the Woollard case and the Masciandaro case, and the Chester case as well. So it is protecting the public from gun violence and furthering public safety.

The reasonable fit lies in the harm, protecting the public from the harm that these weapons can inflict. That was, of course, the subject of the testimony and some of the evidence that we presented, and a lot of the evidence that was before the General Assembly, and considered by the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit in Heller II, that identifies the public safety risks of these guns, of course, as culminated in some of the tragedies that the General Assembly had very fresh in its mind when it enacted this law.

So the substantial fit is from the fact that these very dangerous weapons, to the extent that they proliferate and end up causing a danger to public safety, that the General Assembly has the right to determine that they are too dangerous in light of their specific features, the features that have caused them to be on this list, when people have access to handguns and other types of long guns for the lawful purpose of self-defense within the home, as well as for other purposes, like hunting and sport shooting, and things of that nature.

So it is not a ban on all weapons that could be used for self-defense. Those rights are preserved, the rights that the <u>Heller</u> court and the Fourth Circuit following from that have found must be protected by having weapons that can be used for self-defense within the home.

This does not affect that. This affects a particularly dangerous class of weapons suited for military-style assaults, not the weapon overwhelmingly chosen and best suited for self-defense within the home.

THE COURT: You have alluded to this a little bit. As I understood your papers, of course, the purpose generally is public safety, but specifically,

you are focused on the particular dangerousness of these weapons in connection with what I'll just call mass murders.

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I also saw a reference to the safety of law enforcement officers. Is that something --

MR. FADER: It certainly is, Your Honor, and that was another issue that was discussed in particular in the <u>Heller</u> two decision, that these pose particular risks to law enforcement.

They are, again, they are designed to be able to be used for, you know, military-style assaults, and that's why they are called assault weapons, and that poses a particular risk to police officers in the field if they were to come in contact with somebody with these types of weapons, as distinct from a handgun or a different type of long gun. It's a particular danger to law enforcement.

THE COURT: As opposed to an argument that crimes generally are more likely to be committed by long guns. I mean you're not making that --

MR. FADER: Not at all. In fact, the opposite is true. Crimes generally are more likely to be committed using handguns.

THE COURT: Right. If we go forward with the preliminary injunction hearing -- I'm just curious at

this point -- do you have in mind additional evidence? Would you expect me simply to be looking at what's in your memorandum now and what's discussed in the Heller II, the D.C. Circuit Heller opinion, or have you contemplated that yet?

MR. FADER: We haven't gotten to the point of what additional evidence we might put in at that point. I think a couple of things on that.

First of all, I think the evidence that's there is certainly sufficient to show the reasonable fit to the government's interest.

Secondly, I think that obviously we are not here on the preliminary injunction, but there are a number of factors that I think could not be overcome on a preliminary injunction motion by the plaintiffs, including the complete absence of irreparable harm.

So I would question the utility of that at this point as opposed to proceeding to a hearing on the merits on a permanent injunction. But we have not gotten to the point of deciding what other evidence there might be. This was filed on Friday.

THE COURT: Sure, sure. Again, this is something I may just wind up discussing additionally with counsel, but I would have a question about whether, assuming it goes forward to an injunction

hearing, whether we even need to call it a preliminary injunction or whether it would make sense to just get to the merits, and whether there is or is not going to be a permanent injunction so that you all could get to the Fourth Circuit.

MR. FADER: I think there is a lot of sense in that, Your Honor.

I will only touch on briefly, I think that it is very clear that there is no evidence in the record that one needs more than ten rounds at one time in order to have a defense of the home. I think the plaintiffs have promised such evidence to come, but it is certainly not in this record and not something that the Court can rule on.

As far as the equal protection claim, that is a claim that would be subject to a rational basis.

There is no suspect class involved in this, and for reasons we -- unless Your Honor has questions, I don't feel the need to go into further -- we think it's clear that retired law enforcement officers are not similarly situated with respect to this specific provision.

I addressed the vagueness issue I think already.

As far as the public interest, the General Assembly of the State of Maryland has identified what

is in the public interest here based on the evidence that the public safety requires this.

The fact that the General Assembly did not enact this as an emergency law to take effect immediately is irrelevant to that. The General Assembly determined that the public safety required this Act.

Moreover, Your Honor is correct. It's not unusual to have a time period. In fact, it is much more usual for all laws to go into effect in Maryland on October 1st. That's the standard. That's the norm.

Whether the recent dramatic increase in sales of these weapons in the last few months, if the General Assembly had to do it over again, whether it would have done it the same away is a question that nobody will know. But the General Assembly's choice was to have it go into effect in the normal course on October 1st, and that doesn't at all implicate whether there is in fact a public interest basis for the law.

Unless Your Honor has further questions on this, I think I'll sit down.

THE COURT: That's fine.

MR. FADER: Thank you.

THE COURT: Thank you.

Do you all want to move on to the Doe case?

MS. WOODWARD: Your Honor, if I could just add two things to the record vis-a-vis this particular motion?

THE COURT: Sure.

MS. WOODWARD: Your Honor had asked a question regarding vagueness, and whether there was a case to bring to the Court's attention.

There is a case, Your Honor, People's Rights

Organization versus City of Columbus, Court of Appeals

for the Sixth Circuit. The court had noted in

reference to other cases that nothing in the ordinance

provided sufficient information to enable a person of

average intelligence to determine whether a weapon

they wish to purchase has a design history of the sort

which would bring it within the ordinance's coverage,

and there was a holding of a similar provision invalid

because ascertaining the design history and action of

a pistol is not something that can be expected of a

person of common intelligence.

The record in that case indicated that the average gun owner knows very little about how the gun actually operates vis-a-vis its design features.

Now I don't want to suggest that a firearm user does not know how to operate their firearm. I don't want to put that out there and suggest that people

don't know what they are doing, but the mechanical distinctions, Your Honor, are beyond the common citizen.

THE COURT: Do you have a cite to that Sixth Circuit case?

MS. WOODWARD: The cite to the Sixth Circuit case, Your Honor, 152 F.3d 522, 1998.

THE COURT: Thank you.

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MS. WOODWARD: Also on magazine rounds, Your Honor, you had a specific question regarding really, what's the difference between 10 and 20, I think to get to the heart of that question.

We would submit, Your Honor, that it is a 15-to-19 round magazine that is common in popular handguns and commonly used handguns. There are no 10-round magazines available for certain popular commonly used handguns.

We are not asking for unlimited capacity. What we are talking about here is what would be used on standard handguns that are protected by Heller.

I just wanted to make sure that we had information in the record that it is in excess of 10, perhaps less than 20, in that 15 to 19 range, Your Honor, that a plaintiff would use to have the effective use of a handgun in the home.

1 THE COURT: Okay.

MS. WOODWARD: Thank you, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Thank you.

MR. SWEENEY: May it please the Court, this is

John Parker Sweeney again for the plaintiffs,

addressing the Doe lawsuit.

We are here simply asking to be able to acquire handguns for use in the home for defense. This is the core right of the Second Amendment that was addressed by <u>Heller</u> and has been embraced by the Fourth Circuit.

The Fourth Circuit characterized it in Chester
as the right of a law-abiding, responsible citizen to
possess and carry a weapon for self-defense.

These rights are newly articulated, Your Honor. It has only been five years since <u>Heller</u> was decided in the Supreme Court, only three since <u>McDonald</u> came down, clearly applying Heller to the states.

Maryland, as you know, has no constitutional right to bear arms. It is one of the few states that doesn't. It never has. There's no tradition here in Maryland.

And it's not surprising that we hear hostility not only in this courtroom, but throughout the state, to the exercise of that newly articulated right.

I submit, Your Honor --

THE COURT: I will just interject to say that I am not hearing hostility to the core fundamental right of having at least handguns in the home for self-defense. I don't think that's what this case is about, not in this courtroom.

MR. SWEENEY: Well, Your Honor, when a hundred thousand individuals flocked to the shops, to the sporting good stores, to the Winks, to the Atlantic Guns to purchase firearms this year, they overwhelmingly chose handguns, and that is the vote with the feet of the citizens of Maryland for their weapon of choice for self-protection in the home.

Now the State said they regret that this has happened. The Maryland State Police have issued a number of releases, and this is not my first time in court with Mr. Fader and Mr. Friedman with respect to handgun regulation in Maryland. But this is my first time in federal court, Your Honor.

The reason we are here in federal court today is that today there is a de facto ban on acquiring handguns. Unless you are active or retired law enforcement or military, today you cannot go to the Winks, you cannot go to Atlantic Guns and fill out a Form 77R to purchase a handgun. You will be turned away. There is a moratorium.

When the General Assembly passed the handgun qualification requirement, I cannot believe, and there is no indication, that they would require on October 1 a handgun qualification license for the purchase of a handgun if there was none that could be obtained in the State of Maryland, because the State of Maryland had not implemented the system.

We have learned from the State's response,

Captain Dalaine Brady's affidavit, that they were

aware of this qualification requirement being put into

the Bill even before the Bill was introduced, that

they had millions of dollars that were allocated for

implementing the handgun qualification license

requirement.

Today we've learned that they are going to offer them for the first time by application today, and that the State does not expect applications to come in right away. As Dalaine Brady's affidavit says, she expects they will be staggered as they come in.

Why is that? That's because the training and fingerprinting requirements for the new handgun qualification license aren't fully up and running and available to citizens.

I think it is quite telling that the State, in its opposition papers to our motion, nowhere says a

date certain when the first handgun qualification license will issue. They don't know, or if they know, they certainly are not sharing it with us.

This is hostility to the exercise of the right to acquire a handgun for self-protection in the home.

THE COURT: You're not challenging the licensing law is unconstitutional, are you?

MR. SWEENEY: I am not, but as implemented, it is becoming closer and closer to an implemented challenge. But that's not what I am here for today, Your Honor.

Today, no one, if you are not police or military, can purchase a handgun. No one can go to a store and apply, fill out a Form 77R for a handgun, because they don't have a handgun qualification license. This is a de facto moratorium.

Citizens of Maryland cannot buy a handgun today, and we don't know how long that period will last.

We've asked. They haven't told us. We don't know.

So the denial of a right certainly starts with the delay in allowing its exercise. Individuals, individual members of association plaintiffs here today who want a handgun can't purchase it.

THE COURT: But you are not suggesting that it is unconstitutional, are you, that one --

MR. SWEENEY: I am suggesting -- I'm sorry.

Excuse me, Your Honor.

THE COURT: I'm sorry. Let me just finish.

That there be licensing and regulation schemes in effect that would require, for example, a background check, a delay?

I mean it is not unusual, I don't think, for people to have to wait some period of time to purchase a weapon.

MR. SWEENEY: The law of Maryland establishes a seven-day waiting period, Your Honor, for the purchase of a handgun. That law has been on the books for many years. It certainly predates Heller. No one has reviewed its constitutionality under Heller, and we are not here today challenging the constitutionality of that requirement. What we are challenging is something more than that.

The seven-day waiting period associated with the 77R application to purchase a handgun has long been on the books. We have established only earlier this year that once that waiting period expires, a handgun may be transferred.

That is not the issue. The issue is when will anyone even be able to fill out a 77R to start that seven-day waiting period running? We don't know when

that could be. At the earliest, it will be sometime in November, at the earliest.

We have a de facto moratorium. They are not ready. They don't have the process in place. Their failure to implement the handgun qualification license in a timely manner has resulted in a catch-22. You need a license, but you can't get one. That's where we are today, and they haven't told us when it will happen.

Now, there is also a problem of the confusion which has been created by the conflicting signals from two of the defendants with respect to the massive backlog of applicants for handguns.

We have something approaching 50,000 applicants for handguns right now whose applications have not been processed and approved or not disapproved by the Maryland State Police.

The Attorney General's Office earlier this year, in response to a delegate inquiry, opined that anyone in the backlog as of October 1 could not receive transfer of that handgun, once approved, unless they had a handgun qualification license.

Suddenly, last week, the Maryland State Police said well, we're not going to enforce that requirement. It's not required, or maybe it's

required, but we are not going to enforce it, and has thrown complete confusion into the community.

What we are asking for here today, Your Honor, is a temporary restraining order and/or a preliminary injunction for at least 90 days to allow the State to get its act together, to have the handgun qualification license process up and running, to allow an opportunity for citizens to apply for a handgun qualification license, to take that license down to a shop and apply for a firearm. That's what we are asking for today.

As I understand it, the State has not challenged that this is a core Second Amendment right, but you can't exercise it if you can't buy a handgun.

They said this is a temporary, a temporary processing delay, and that we do not have a right to immediate possession.

We're not asking for immediate possession.

That's not what we are asking here. We are asking for the law to be stayed that will allow us to continue to fill out Form 77R's and apply for the purchase of handguns while the process is implemented, and that's all we are asking for today. During this period of time the backlog can be processed and resolved.

Now one thing very important, and I want to be

very careful to distinguish because I fear that I may have struck with a little too broad a blade in my motions papers. We are not asking for this Court to stay all of Public Safety Article 5-117.1. We are only asking that the Court stay provisions (b) and (c) of that Article.

The reason we are only asking for those, those are what we call in the paper the handgun qualification license requirements. That is those provisions of the law that prohibit the sale, rental or transfer of a handgun to anyone without a handgun qualification license, and prohibit anyone from accepting that sale, rental or transfer without a handgun qualification license.

That's all we are asking to be stayed today,

Your Honor. The State obviously misconstrued my

papers, and we were all working on a tight deadline.

We are not asking the application process to be

stayed. We are not here for that today.

If the State is up and running today as they say they are -- and God bless them. I hope it works well, and things are up and running -- that's fine. We are not asking for a stay of that. What we want is a stay of the prohibitions, a stay of the prohibitions from our purchase today of handguns until the system is up

and running and handgun qualification licenses can be issued. Until then, only the police and the military can buy handguns.

We are proudly known as the Free State, Your Honor, but the Second Amendment and the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution were designed entirely so that we did not become a police state.

Citizens are entitled to purchase handguns for self-defense, and that is not happening today, and only Your Honor can change that.

Thank you.

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THE COURT: Thank you, Mr. Sweeney.

Mr. Fader.

MR. FADER: Thank you, Your Honor.

I would just like to begin -- obviously Your

Honor noted that you are not here in hostility to the fundamental right, nor is the State here in hostility to the fundamental right to self-defense in the home, including through the use of handguns, and this law is not hostile to that right.

This law requiring handgun qualification
licenses in order to purchase handguns was enacted, as
the rest of the package of laws in Chapter 427, for
the purposes of protecting public safety based on
scientific evidence of the value of this registration

system in keeping guns out of the hands of criminals.

Especially the fingerprint requirement that is part of the handgun qualification license severely curtails straw gun purchases that allow guns to get into the hands of people who should not possess them.

This is not a law that bans handguns or comes close to that, and the fact that there's an administrative process that individuals need to go through in order to get their handgun qualification license does not burden the Second Amendment right to ultimately possess those guns, and to have those guns in their homes for the purpose of self-defense.

There are administrative delays. There have been administrative delays in processing the firearm application, which I hope we made clear in our papers is a completely separate issue from the handgun qualification license that goes into effect today.

In fact, the process is up and running. I signed on this morning myself to make sure that it was, and established a log-in ID to get to the screen where you can start putting in your information to apply for one. So the system is up and running today.

The argument that Mr. Sweeney made about we know that there's not going to be any handgun qualification license issued until November, I certainly don't know

that. The process is underway for the application.

The State, by law, has 30 days to complete the review, but I don't think there's any indication that it is necessarily going to take that long for the first license to be issued, and there is not a challenge here to the underlying constitutionality of the requirement.

It's pure speculation to say that there are going to be delays out into the indefinite future in the issuance of these licenses, and as we noted in our papers, there's no case that we are aware of that says there is an immediate right to possession, without going through a reasonable administrative process that would result in background checks, including now through the extra layer of security of the fingerprint that is so important to making sure that the weapons don't get into the hands of people in whose hands they should not be.

There are two claims or at least two ways in which the plaintiffs have articulated their claim, the first, an allegation that there is essentially a de facto ban on possession of handguns, or the acquisition of handguns. It is certainly not a ban on the possession of handguns. Everybody who has a handgun and has had one continues to have one, and

handguns can be possessed and used for self-defense within the home.

With respect to future acquisition, the State has simply imposed a reasonable qualification process, and if there are going to be problems in that process, it's reasonable to let the process take its course and see how it actually functions before exercising the extraordinary equitable relief of enjoining a state statute that was enacted for the protection of public safety and protection to the citizens of the State of Maryland.

The second claim that has been made by the plaintiffs is really a complaint in search of a cause of action, and there is no legal claim or legal cause of action that they have articulated that could provide the basis for a temporary restraining order issued by the Court.

Their claim is that there is some sort of conflict between the Attorney General's Opinion that the law means what it says, which is you need a handgun qualification license to buy a handgun as of October 1st on the one hand, and the Maryland State Police's press release saying that they do not intend to enforce that requirement with respect to people who have applications to purchase firearms pending as of

October 1st.

There's no conflict between, on the one hand, the statement of what the law is, and on the other hand, the statement of an agency saying how they intend to enforce that law.

First of all, there's no conflict. Secondly, even if there were, the plaintiffs haven't identified an actual legal right or cause of action that would be implicated by that and that would provide any basis for equitable relief from this Court.

So the State does not believe that there is a likelihood of success with respect to either of the claims that the plaintiffs have raised on the merits, and much to the contrary, the likelihood of success weighs strongly in favor of the State.

With respect to irreparable harm, we also don't believe that there have been any allegations that rise to the level of a likelihood of irreparable harm on behalf of the plaintiffs. There has been a significant increase in purchases of handguns over the course of time since Chapter 427 has been enacted.

Handguns are possessed and have been acquired and will, through this new administrative process, be able to be acquired going forward, and there has not been any assertion of actual irreparable harm as a

result of either the past delays in processing of firearm applications, which are not even at issue in their lawsuit, or the speculation as to potential future delays in the process that has just gotten underway today.

The General Assembly of the State of Maryland determined, based on very strong scientific evidence linking these fingerprinting requirements to keeping handguns out of the hands of criminals, that it was in the public interest to the State of Maryland that this requirement went into place. The public interest, therefore, certainly weighs against issuing equitable relief.

And for the same reason, the balance of equities, based on the public interest supported by this law and this requirement going into effect, as contrasted with, really, an absence of anything other than possible economic harm to the dealer plaintiffs, also weighs against the issuance of preliminary equitable relief.

Unless Your Honor has any questions, thank you.

THE COURT: Thank you.

Mr. Sweeney.

MR. SWEENEY: If I may, Your Honor, very briefly respond?

One, the seven-day statutory requirement for Maryland State Police to act on 77R background checks has now morphed into almost four months. It takes four months after you apply for a handgun for you to hear back from the Maryland State Police on whether or not they have approved your application.

We have no idea how the handgun qualification license processing will go, but they have to do all the checks that are involved in the 77R application checking process, plus they have to look at and check fingerprints, and they have to look at and check training requirement satisfactions that aren't present in the current 77R.

So we expect it would take longer. We know there will be different personnel involved, but all I've heard again from Mr. Fader is speculation as to when it will be offered.

We have asked for very specific relief, Your
Honor, very specific relief which will resolve this
situation satisfactorily, consistent with the
Constitution and the rights of the plaintiffs, as well
as the needs of the State of Maryland, and that is
that this Court issue a declaratory judgment that the
de facto prohibition created by the State's catch-22
is a violation of the Second Amendment, and a staying

of the effective date of only the prohibited paragraphs of Section 5-117.1(b) and (c), and allow the State to go ahead and process applications.

Thank you, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Thank you very much.

All right. Thank you all for your arguments.

I'm going to take about a ten-minute recess, and I'll come back and give you a ruling.

(A recess was taken.)

THE COURT: Let me start by thanking counsel for their thorough arguments and briefing on short notice. I am here to consider the request for a temporary restraining order first in the Tardy v. O'Malley case and then in the Doe case.

Starting, of course, with the standards for a temporary restraining order, which will be the same in both cases, it is clear under current law, and I think this at least is not debated, that the plaintiffs have the burden of making a clear showing on all four factors in regard to a TRO or, for that matter, a preliminary injunction:

First, that they are likely to succeed on the merits; second, that they are likely to suffer irreparable harm; third, that a balance of hardships tips in the plaintiffs' favor; and fourth, that the

injunction is in the public interest, paying particular regard for the public consequences.

A couple of cases to cite for that are a 2013 Fourth Circuit case, <u>Pashby versus Delia</u>, 709 F.3d 307, and, of course, <u>The Real Truth about Obama</u>, 575 F.3d 343, simply for the standard.

It is also worth noting that in terms of the TRO request, this is extraordinary relief. You need to demonstrate a true emergency, and I will point out again that it seems to me the plaintiffs have known for months that this law would take effect October 1st, but the challenge was not filed until last Friday.

What the law does, and I am speaking now of the law at issue in Tardy, the challenge in Tardy, generally speaking, and I am not going to be precise about every statutory provision, but generally on and after October 1st, this law prohibits the sale and possession and receipt of assault weapons. These are defined as certain semiautomatic pistols, which are not the subject of the challenge. There are also certain semiautomatic rifles and shotguns that are defined as assault weapons and are affected by this new law.

The new law also generally prohibits sale and

receipt of detachable magazines with the capacity of over ten rounds of ammunition.

The law imposes criminal penalties for violation, but it permits individuals to retain, without penalty, all such long guns that were lawfully acquired, or where the purchase has been applied for prior to October 1st. Again, the assault pistol issue is not challenged.

So turning to the likelihood of success on the Second Amendment challenge, let me review some of the relevant case law. Of course, <u>Heller</u>, a Supreme Court case, established that the core element of the Second Amendment is an individual's right to use weapons in the defense of their home. Those weapons are those commonly possessed by law-abiding responsible citizens for that purpose, and the Court noted that handguns are far and away the preferred self-defense weapon for persons in their homes.

 $\underline{\text{Heller}}$, of course, involved a total ban on handguns.

This challenged law, the aspect of the law that is challenged, does not prohibit an entire class of weapons. It is a subclass of long guns only, classified as assault rifles.

The Second Amendment, as the Supreme Court

explained, does not protect dangerous and unusual weapons, which the Court in that $\underline{\text{Heller}}$ opinion at least mentioned included short barreled shotguns.

Heller was followed by the McDonald case, which described Heller as holding that the Second Amendment protects the right to possess a handgun in the home for the purpose of self-defense, and, of course, held the Second Amendment applicable to the states under the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. So that's in part why we are here.

Counsel have referred to, and I agree it is a very significant Fourth Circuit opinion, <u>U.S. versus</u>

<u>Chester</u>, 628 F.3d 673, from the Fourth Circuit, in

2010. The Fourth Circuit adopted, as a number of other circuits have done, a two-part test, which is first whether the challenged law imposes a burden on conduct that falls within the scope of the Second Amendment's guarantee.

If it does not, and the example they gave was carrying a sawed-off shotgun, then the law is valid. At least it is not subject to a Second Amendment challenge.

If it does burden conduct within the scope of the Second Amendment, then the Court needs to determine, and then apply, the appropriate level of

means-end scrutiny.

2.5

In <u>Chester</u>, which, as you all know, criminalized possession of a firearm after a misdemeanor conviction for a crime of domestic violence, the Fourth Circuit chose intermediate scrutiny. The Court explained that the level of scrutiny to be applied depends on both the nature of the conduct that is being regulated and the degree to which the challenged law burdens those rights.

Under intermediate scrutiny, of course, the government has to demonstrate a reasonable fit between the challenged law and a substantial government objective.

In that case, the Fourth Circuit remanded to permit the government to offer evidence to establish that relationship.

I would note that in that case, one of the judges on the panel, Judge Davis, concurred, but added that he thought strict scrutiny would be unwarranted in a Second Amendment case.

Since then there have been other challenges to these criminal statutes. In Section 922(g) convictions, challenges have been denied by the Fourth Circuit under intermediate scrutiny. An example of that is United States versus Mahin, at 668 F.3d 119.

Now another case that counsel appropriately referred to, and I may or may not also pronounce it correctly, is <u>United States versus Masciandaro</u>, at 638 F.3d 458, which applied intermediate scrutiny to uphold a conviction for carrying a loaded firearm in a car, in violation of National Park regulations. The Court did assume, but not decide in that case, that strict scrutiny would apply to any law that burdened the fundamental core right of self-defense in the home by law-abiding citizens.

Similarly, we have <u>Woollard versus Gallagher</u> -
I believe that's the most recent one here from the

Fourth Circuit -- 712 F.3d 865, where the Fourth

Circuit again upheld under intermediate scrutiny the

requirement that a person show good and substantial

reason to wear and carry a handgun outside the home,

again assuming, without deciding, that strict scrutiny

would apply if the requirement were applied to

carrying handguns inside the home. Again, a broader

and different class of weapons was involved.

So it seems to me the question here first, on likelihood of success, when I at some point get to an actual decision on the merits, is whether the Second Amendment applies to these assault weapons at all or whether these are unusual and dangerous, like the

sawed-off shotgun; assuming, and again, a number of courts have just gone on to that second prong and assumed that some Second Amendment protection applies, what's the level of scrutiny?

I think an extremely persuasive opinion in this regard is Heller versus D.C., the D.C. Circuit case, at 670 F.3d 1244. Again, simply at this point for purposes of the temporary emergency relief and the factors that I need to look at, likelihood of success, I am likely to agree with the D.C. Circuit -- assuming that the Second Amendment applies at all, intermediate scrutiny is the correct standard; though, I am not making that determination at this point.

I note that despite some of the language about strict scrutiny in the Fourth Circuit cases, if you go back to the <u>Chester</u> case, the Fourth Circuit tells you that you also have to look at the degree to which the conduct burdens a core right, and this law is a prohibition only of a limited number of long guns that we are talking about. It does not affect law-abiding, responsible citizens' right to possess handguns in the home for self-defense, and the Supreme Court has told us that's the weapon of choice for self-defense. It does not impinge on law-abiding, responsible citizens' right to possess most long guns in the home for

self-defense as well.

2.5

Of course, those citizens can still have magazines that fire up to ten rounds without reloading.

The <u>Heller</u> case, assessing a very similar law, did note that assault rifles were in common use, and in this case plaintiffs have presented some evidence about the sale and common purchase of these kind of rifles; but the D.C. Circuit noted that they were not necessarily in common use for self-defense.

Plaintiffs' counsel tells me that they will be able to provide that evidence. There is certainly no evidence of that yet, that it is necessary or common for assault rifles and high capacity magazines to be used for self-defense in the home.

The D.C. Circuit decided that even if the Second Amendment were implicated, this ban on assault rifles and high capacity magazines was not a substantial burden on a core Second Amendment right, and that the government had showed a reasonable fit between this prohibition and the substantial governmental interest of protecting law enforcement officers and controlling crimes, especially those involving mass tragedies, mass wounding and murder, and there were a number of studies that were cited for that proposition in the

D.C. case.

So I do not find at this point that the plaintiffs have made a clear showing of a likelihood of success on the merits, as would be required to grant the extraordinary relief they seek, nor have they made a clear showing of the likelihood of irreparable harm.

First of all, I do believe that the delay in bringing this suit undercuts their argument of irreparable harm. This could have been brought months ago and was not.

Second of all, the individuals, and particularly the individual plaintiffs here, still have the assault weapons and high capacity magazines that were acquired legally before October 1st and have those available for self-defense.

There is a very limited amount of potentially economic harm that has been proffered on behalf of the dealers. Again, we are talking about not a necessarily lengthy period of time, so I don't think that's an irreparable harm that has been shown by the plaintiffs.

So turning for the moment to the public interest, I believe there is a strong public interest in upholding a duly enacted law that is directed at

the protection of public safety, including lessening the risk of mass tragedies, like Newtown, and others in the news, and lessening the risk of harm to law enforcement officers.

In some of the information and evidence provided by the State, which they have said they may wish to supplement, there is even reference to the fact that a necessity to pause to reload has enabled citizens in some instances to intervene and disarm people who are involved in these horrific crimes.

In any event, I do not find that the balance of harm, therefore, tips in favor of the plaintiffs, quite the contrary.

I don't find the plaintiffs' need to be able to fire more bullets, again, in the absence of some kind of evidence that this is necessary for self-defense, the need to fire more bullets in defense of the home, which appears to be based on the lack of accuracy that they propose the citizens would have in firing these weapons, I can't see that as tipping the balance in favor of the plaintiffs, or arguing against the strong public interest here.

The equal protection argument, to the extent that it is here to be made, I think the State has clearly shown a rational basis for distinction between

retired law enforcement officers and other citizens.

Just to mention the training that they receive would

be one element of that distinction.

2.5

And it is not a general right, as I understand it, for retired law enforcement officers to purchase any assault weapon they might want to in the future. It has to be connected to their retirement.

In terms of the vagueness challenge and likelihood of success, it appears that the law on copies has been the same since 1996, and it has not been shown that it has been difficult for the plaintiffs in this case, particularly dealers, and those experienced in firearms, to understand those definitions. The copycats are fairly clearly defined under the law, I believe, in terms of the features that are required.

Again, just in terms of likelihood of success, I am not making a final ruling, and I will certainly look at the Sixth Circuit case that the plaintiffs have mentioned, as well as any other information they might want to present about these definitions; but I do not, on the current record, believe that the plaintiffs have met the requirements for a temporary restraining order, for the reasons that I have just stated.

In terms of a preliminary injunction hearing, I think the most sensible thing for me to do is to ask counsel to confer and contact chambers, and we will set up a conference call to discuss a reasonable schedule for a preliminary injunction and what evidence either side might want to present, and again, the question of whether it should be purely a preliminary injunction hearing or a hearing on the merits. We can talk about that more with a conference call and consider further all the issues that both sides have raised today.

I will enter a separate very brief order -- this is obviously my oral opinion -- denying the temporary restraining order in the Tardy case.

Regarding the Doe case, I will also find that the plaintiffs have failed to meet the requirements for a temporary restraining order. This seems to me at this stage particularly speculative. The plaintiffs have not shown any irreparable harm.

There's a handgun qualification licensing system that is not challenged. It begins today. There is no showing yet of any unreasonable delay.

There is an administrative delay in place now for processing the applications. That is not the issue. That's not part of the new law. Of course,

that is caused by the extreme increase in applications for guns of various kinds that has occurred between the enactment of this law and the effective date here in October.

But as far as the handgun qualification licensing requirement, on the record in front of me, it is up and running today. Whether, or what degree of delay there will be, at this point is speculative.

With no challenge to the underlying constitutionality of the handgun qualification licensing requirements, and there being no right to immediate possession of even handguns, and no harm that I can see shown from the Maryland State Police saying that they may choose not to enforce some provisions in this law, I certainly can't see that there is a sufficient showing of likelihood of imminent harm, or a likelihood of success on the merits that would outweigh the public interest in permitting, again, a duly enacted law that is aimed at protecting public safety and keeping guns out of the hands of criminals from proceeding in effect as it is today.

So I will do a separate short order denying that and again can discuss with counsel in a separate conference call what schedule may be necessary for

further proceedings on that issue. Anything I have not addressed, anything else anybody needs to say? I understand you disagree, but anything you feel I have not addressed or would like me to clarify? MR. SWEENEY: Nothing further, Your Honor. Thank you. MS. WOODWARD: Thank you, Your Honor. MR. FADER: Nothing further, Your Honor. THE COURT: All right. Thank you all. (The proceedings concluded.)

REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

| I hereby certify that the foregoing transcript in |
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| the matter of Shawn J. Tardy, et al., Plaintiffs vs. |
| Martin J. O'Malley, in his official capacity as |
| Governor of the State of Maryland, et al., Defendants, |
| Civil Action No. CCB-13-2841, and Jane Doe, et al., |
| Plaintiffs vs. Martin J. O'Malley, in his official |
| capacity as Governor of the State of Maryland, et al., |
| Defendants, Civil Action No. CCB-13-2861, before the |
| Honorable Catherine C. Blake, United States District |
| Judge, on October 1, 2013 is true and accurate. |

Gail A. Simpkins

Official Court Reporter

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