

Beat: Politics

Maryland at the Center of National Gun Control Debate

2nd Amendment supporters storm Capital

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USPA NEWS - For at least one today, Maryland was at the epicenter of the national debate over gun control. Amidst nearly 1,000 gun rights advocates on Lawyers Mall and those filing into the Miller Senate Office Building yesterday, Governor Martin O'Malley (D) testified before a Senate Committee on gun control.

After a rally on Lawyers Mall, thousands of gun-rights advocates have begun amassing outside the Miller Senate Office Building to protest Gov. Martin O'Malley's proposed gun-control legislation, that has been described by many as "far reaching". Senate President Thomas V. "Mike" Miller said yesterday, that he believes the Governor's legislation needs to be broken down into parts (separate bills) in order for any of it to pass through the legislature and become law.

Just over a mile away from the State House, President Barack Obama was also talking gun control, but with Senate Democrats from Capital Hill, who were in town for a retreat at the Annapolis Westin.

For gun-rights advocates, yesterday was a two for one deal in Annapolis.

Just before Noon, over 200 people had signed up to speak in both support and opposition to SB 281, Governor O'Malley's gun control legislation, and Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee Chair, Brian Frosh, told GNS that he knew the passion that both sides were bringing to the Committee in their testimony, and was prepared to give each side four (4) hours to present their testimony. That would take this hearing to at least 9:00PM.

In Governor O'Malley's testimony he stressed that this legislation was not aimed at hunters or sportsman, but at those who use Military style assault weapons to commit acts of horror, referencing the recent massacre at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, CT which took the lives of 25+ children and teachers.

Governor O'Malley cast assault rifles as "military weapons" that have no place in society other than on a battlefield. He further stated that his strict licensing requirements and new mental health rules on gun ownership would save lives.

"We choose to take on gun violence because every life is precious," O'Malley told the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee at the outset of a hearing. "There is no tragedy worse than the violent taking of a child's life."

"This isn't about ideology. This is about Public Safety," O'Malley told Senators in his testimony.

But wait...

It isn't just Senate President Mike Miller who has concerns. O'Malley is already engaged in a tug of war with members of his own party, not to mention Republicans like Senator Nanacy Jacobs, and Delegate Don Dwyer (R-31) who are as passionately opposed to this legislation as the Governor is for it.

The bill in its current form is expected to have difficulty making it out its respective committee's in both the Senate and House of Delegates.

Fasten your seat belts Maryland, this bill is far from being on the Governor's desk awaiting his signature.

Article online:

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