

Testimony encouraging a favorable report for House Bill 4-  
**Background Checks for Long Guns**  
**Howard County State's Attorney Rich Gibson**

- My name is Rich Gibson, I am the State's Attorney for Howard County.
- Prior to being elected into office I was a prosecutor in Baltimore City for 12 years
- 5 of those years I spent in the homicide unit
- 2 years prior to being a prosecutor in Baltimore City I was a prosecutor in Prince George's County, Maryland.
- I have seen the horror and impact of gun violence on too many people and too many families
- I believe that any and all reasonable measures to reduce gun violence, and protect against the loss of life are deserving of support - which is why I am here today adding my voice in support of House Bill 4
- Yes, it is true that most of the gun violence is attributable to handguns. However, that does not mean that long guns are not used in crimes of violence - and reasonable measures such as background checks should be in place to prevent future harm.
- Make no mistake the sensible and reasonable laws put in place requiring background checks for handguns that you, the Md legislature, have put into effect are having a profound impact and are saving lives. There is no logical basis why those same protections should not be extended to long guns.
- Howard County does not have the same frequency of violent crime as other areas throughout our State but that does not mean we are not impacted by the problems that occur in nearby jurisdictions we are all interconnected.
- Currently before me in Howard County we have a homicide case where the defendant, who is presumed innocent until proven guilty, is alleged to have used a long gun (a .22 caliber rifle) to shoot at two people, killing one of them. This defendant was not legally allowed to possess any kind of firearm due to having a prior disqualifying conviction.
- The individuals involved were in a disagreement. That disagreement lead to a physical fight. After losing the fight the defendant ran into his home and came out with a .22 caliber rifle and shot at the victims striking one of them in the back which eventually lead to that person's death
- This bill, if it were in place, might have been enough to keep the defendant in this case from having access to a gun; and if he didn't have access to a gun, which he should not have had in the first place due to his prior assault conviction, maybe the victim would be alive today.
- I strongly support and would ask for a favorable report for House Bill 4. The most effective way to prevent an unnecessary death is to prevent those who should not have guns from getting access to them in the first place.
- Thank you very much for your time and consideration; are there any questions?