



# THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF MARYLAND

## TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION OF SB 0338:

### Handgun Permit – Preliminary Approval

**\*\*UNFAVORABLE\*\***

February 4, 2022

**TO:** Hon, William C. Smith Jr., Chair, Hon. Jeff Waldstreicher, Vice Chair and the members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

**FROM:** Rev. Kenneth O. Phelps, Jr., Co-Chair, Maryland Episcopal Public Policy Network, Diocese of Maryland

**DATE:** February 4, 2022

Non-violence is at the core of Christian faith and practice. The teachings of Jesus – as contained in the New Testament – call the faithful to a rejection of a system of retribution and righteous violence and into an alternative way of living that is based on unconditional love of neighbor and accountability for the common good.

We cannot normalize violence or contemplate its use ever as being for the right. And, we do not believe that the answer to escalating gun violence is an increase in the number of guns on the street.

Our bishops have called for common sense gun safety measures that enjoy the support of gun owners and non-gun owners alike: handgun purchaser licensing; background checks on all gun purchasers; restrictions on gun ownership by domestic abusers; classification of gun trafficking as a federal crime; encouragement for the development of “smart gun” technology; and, federal funding for research into gun violence prevention strategies – long overdue. And, our Church has passed numerous resolutions calling for many of these measures.

It is the opinion of our Public Policy network, that this bill serves only to undermine efforts to ensure that those who purchase firearms are deemed fit to do so and opens the door to potentially violent behavior during the proposed 120 day investigation period. Why make it easier for someone with violent intent to own a gun?

We request an unfavorable report