

March 30, 2023

Senate Bill 858

**Firearm Safety - Storage Requirements and Youth Suicide Prevention
(Jaelynn's Law)**

House Judiciary Committee

Position: FAVORABLE

Anne Arundel County **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill 858 – Firearm Safety - Storage Requirements and Youth Suicide Prevention (Jaelynn's Law). This Bill prohibits a person, under certain circumstances, from storing or leaving a firearm in a location where they knew or reasonably should have known that a prohibited person or an unsupervised minor is likely to gain access to the firearm and does gain access to the firearm, and adds additional penalties when a prohibited person's or minor's access to the firearm results in harm to the prohibited person, the minor, or to another person.

Firearms are the leading cause of death for children 1-17 in the United States.¹ Youth access to firearms is a public health risk, and increased access heightens the risk of unintentional shootings, youth suicides, and school violence involving a firearm. There are countless tragic stories across the country and here in Maryland of children unintentionally shooting friends or family members when they had access to a gun, or of children as young as six bringing a firearm that was unsecured to school and injuring other students and teachers. Research has shown a 31% increase in unintentional shooting deaths by children of themselves or others between March and December of 2020, compared to the same time period in 2019.² According to the Harvard School of Public Health, one study of firearm suicides among youths ages 17 and under during a two-year period found 82% used a firearm belonging to a family member, usually a parent. In instances where storage was identified, about 2/3 of the firearms had been stored unlocked, and in cases in which the firearms had been locked, the youth knew the combination, where the key was kept or broke into the cabinet.³ Requiring that firearms be secured to prevent unauthorized access by youth will reduce unintentional shootings, youth suicides, and school violence.⁴

For all of these reasons, I respectfully request a **FAVORABLE** report on Senate Bill 858.



Stuart Pittman
County Executive

¹ Everytown for Gun Safety, *Unload, Lock, and Separate* (Feb. 14, 2023).

<https://everytownresearch.org/report/unload-lock-and-separate-secure-storage-practices-to-reduce-gun-violence/>

² Everytown for Gun Safety, *Too Many Children are Gaining Access to Guns, Here's What You Need to Know* (Feb 14, 2023).

<https://everytownsupportfund.org/press/too-many-children-are-gaining-access-to-guns-heres-what-you-need-to-know/>

³ Harvard School of Public Health, *Youth Access to Firearms* (Feb. 14, 2023).

<https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/means-matter/means-matter/youth-access/>

⁴See FN1 *supra*.