



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF MARYLAND

**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB0858:
Firearm Safety - Storage Requirements and Youth Suicide Prevention
(Jaelynn's Law)
FAVORABLE**

TO: Sen. William C. Smith, Jr., Chair, Sen. 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 21, 2023

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.

Over the years, 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; federal funding for research into gun violence prevention strategies, and, legislation for gun safety that will help to prevent this most dire form of domestic violence and suicide. We know the statistics about guns stored at home.

Our Church has passed numerous resolutions calling for many of these measures. We now add to that list our support of this safety measure in the hope that it will save lives.

The Diocese of Maryland requests a favorable report.