



Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

February 21, 2023

Senate Bill 858

Firearm Safety - Storage Requirements and Youth Suicide Prevention

Jaelynn's Law

Support

NCADD-Maryland supports Senate Bill 858. Suicide has been a growing public health crisis for many years. Young people have suffered greatly since the start of the pandemic and that can be seen in the numbers of people with depression, anxiety and increased drug and alcohol use.

House Bill 307 specifies that a firearm must be locked in homes with youth up to the age of 18, so adults must ensure 16 and 17 year olds do not have access. It also requires gun owners to insure prohibited persons, such as those with protective orders, do not have access to firearms. The bill in no way interferes with the right to own guns. What it does do is decrease a young person's risk for suicide by limiting access to loaded guns.

Just as importantly, the bill requires the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) to convene a workgroup and create a guide for families on safe storage practices that can be used by schools and other organizations to distribute. The bill includes a \$1 million appropriation to support outreach and engagement by MDH on this issue. Ensuring that information is disseminated widely is crucial to educating communities both about safe storage and how to prevent suicides.

We urge this Committee give a favorable report to Senate Bill 858.

The Maryland Affiliate of the National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence (NCADD-Maryland) is a statewide organization that works to influence public and private policies on addiction, treatment, and recovery, reduce the stigma associated with the disease, and improve the understanding of addictions and the recovery process. We advocate for and with individuals and families who are affected by alcoholism and drug addiction.