
BILL NO: Senate Bill 858
TITLE: Firearm Safety - Storage Requirements and Youth Suicide Prevention (Jaelynn's Law)
COMMITTEE: Judicial Proceedings
HEARING DATE: February 21, 2023
POSITION: **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS**

Senate Bill 858 would require the safe storage of firearms away from both children and prohibited persons. The Women's Law Center (WLC) supports Senate Bill 858 because increasing protections from inappropriate people having access to firearms is good public policy.

Senate Bill 858 is a common sense update to existing law regarding storage of firearms. It seeks to add protections so that minors, people experiencing suicidal thoughts or "prohibited persons" as defined cannot easily obtain access to firearms. We refer the Committee to the Maryland Network Against Violence's testimony for statistics regarding the use of firearms in domestic violence fatalities. Owners of firearms should always keep their firearms safely locked, separate from ammunition, and not accessible to people who should not have access to them.

We suggest that the definition of "prohibited person" in SB 858 should be amended to specifically include those persons identified in Md. Family Law Code Ann. to § 4-506, rather than relying on a catch-all provision.

Therefore, the Women's Law Center of Maryland, Inc. strongly urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 858 with amendments.

The Women's Law Center of Maryland is a private, non-profit, membership organization that serves as a leading voice for justice and fairness for women. It advocates for the rights of women through legal assistance to individuals and strategic initiatives to achieve systemic change.