



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 27th, 2024

Testimony in Support of SB905
Public Safety – Extreme Risk Protective Orders – Review of Court Records

Dear Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, Members of the Committee

I am before you today to voice my strong support for Senate Bill 905, which focuses on extreme risk protective orders. This bill aims to ensure appropriate access to court records for academic and policy research conducted by researchers affiliated with institutions of higher education.

Senate Bill 905 seeks to amend Article 5-602 of the Public Safety Code, specifically addressing the confidentiality of court records related to petitions for extreme risk protective orders. Under the proposed legislation, researchers affiliated with institutions of higher education conducting academic or policy research would be authorized to review these court records. By allowing qualified researchers access to court records, Senate Bill 905 facilitates rigorous analysis and evaluation of the implementation and impact of extreme risk protective orders. This data-driven approach is crucial for identifying best practices, addressing potential shortcomings, and informing future policy decisions aimed at preventing gun violence and prioritizing public safety.

This bill includes important safeguards to protect the confidentiality of court records, ensuring that access is granted only to authorized personnel for legitimate research purposes. These provisions strike a balance between transparency and privacy, upholding the integrity of the legal process while advancing scholarly inquiry and knowledge dissemination.

Today, you will hear from my panel including Jen Pauliukonis of the Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions, Woodie Kessel of the University of Maryland's *Prevent Gun Violence: Research, Empowerment, Strategies and Solutions (PROGRESS)* program, Paul Nestadt of the Maryland Psychiatric Society, and Karen Herren of Marylanders to Prevent Gun Violence.

Senate Bill 905 strengthens public safety measures and advances research in the field of gun violence prevention. Thank you for your time today, and I urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 905.