



Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

Testimony in Support of - HB 583 - Center for Firearm Violence Prevention - Establishment

TO: Delegate Luke Clippinger, Chair Judiciary Committee
FROM: Ken Shilling, Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland
Gun Violence Prevention Lead Advocate
DATE: February 14, 2024

In my faith tradition, I know that conscience will not be quieted by anything less than truth and justice. Gun violence is a public health epidemic in this country. Gun violence extracts a financial burden of \$10.5 billion annually on Maryland.

Maryland is 8th in the country for legislation on gun violence prevention. But, in regard to the number of deaths from gun violence, we are average. We must enhance the effectiveness of the enforcement of our laws.

Manufacturers can design a new part that is not banned and continue to sell automated weapons. In state buy-back programs, companies can destroy the parts with serial numbers, and resell the remaining parts as a “ghost gun kit”. We must facilitate data collection and research to provide impactful solutions.

HB 583 provides for the establishment of the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention in the Maryland Department of Health. It will implement a holistic public health approach to firearm violence reduction.

HB 583 will foster collaboration between law enforcement and community-based programs. The new Center will develop best practices for scaling community intervention programs. It will educate the public on issues that can prevent gun violence.

We all have a moral duty to provide for public safety. Let us act together in Love.

We urge a favorable report. Vote for HB 583,

Ken Shilling

Gun Violence Prevention Lead Advocate