

CenterForHope Testimony HB583 Establishing Center

Uploaded by: Adam Rosenberg

Position: FAV

A LIFEBRIDGE HEALTH GROUP

CENTER FOR HOPE

Advancing hope, healing and resilience



Date: February 14, 2024

To: Chair Clippinger and Judiciary Committee Members

Reference: HB583-Center for Firearm Violence Prevention - Establishment

Position: **SUPPORT**

Dear Chair, Clippinger and Committee Members:

On behalf of LifeBridge Health's Center for Hope we thank you for this opportunity to provide information in strong support for HB583. Center for Hope annually provides intervention and prevention services for over 7,700 survivors and caregivers impacted by child abuse, domestic violence, community violence, and elder justice. Over 4,300 of our population helped last year were children – many who were witness to, affected by, living regularly with gun violence. At LifeBridge Health, we recognize the devastating impact of violence in our communities, and the growing number of victims of all ages. This is a public health issue. We help our communities by partnering with the people in them to break the cycle of violence. At Center for Hope, we partner with community leaders, stand shoulder to shoulder with parents and caregivers, and help provide survivors of violence and crime with support and healing, to grow a collective hope for a better city and a better world.

Gun violence is now the leading cause of death for children across the United States. Use of a firearm has also become the leading form of suicide. From Baltimore City to Baltimore County to Carroll County, Center for Hope and its parent organization LifeBridge Health has seen the tremendous impact that gun violence has had upon our community and its health care. For years now, including our 2023 recent community health needs assessment, our neighbors have told us that violence and mental health are among their top health concerns. Our health system recognizes its role in keeping its community safe and in preventing gun violence as a health care priority.

Just as LifeBridge Health has taken a public health approach to reducing gun violence, we applaud and stand by Maryland's efforts to reduce the harm from firearm violence. Public health approaches to societal issues have provided great success in Maryland to reduce future harm and injury: for example, B'more for Healthy Babies has been a campaign to reduce infant mortality in Baltimore City through emphasis on policy change, service improvements, community mobilization, and behavioral change – this has improved infant mortality by 28% since the initiative's launch. Similar campaigns have reduced smoking deaths, auto injury, and reduced overdose fatalities.

Looking to find solutions for a reduction in gun violence has become a national issue and Maryland is a leader in finding solutions to reduce gun violence. The proposal of a state level office mirrors that of the strategy from the White House to establish a similar office and will benefit from coordination with federal partners.

Within LifeBridge Health, our Center for Hope is seeing success through a combination of coordinated gun violence responses. In Baltimore City, through our coordinated efforts, we have seen a remarkable 28% reduction in gunshot wound admissions in the Sinai Emergency Department (a level II center) from FY22 to FY23. Those decreases continue today with an additional 50% drop this year to date. Our efforts with community violence interrupters, credible messengers, and coordinated services can be emblematic to similar statewide efforts and solutions.

We urge you to support and give HB583 a favorable report to establish a Center for Firearm Violence Prevention and Intervention within the Maryland Department of Health. By embracing a public health approach and investing in community-driven solutions, we can create a safer and more just Maryland for generations to come.

Respectfully submitted,

Adam Rosenberg
LifeBridge Health, Vice President, Violence Intervention and Prevention
Executive Director, Center for Hope
arosenberg@lifebridgedhealth.org

Jennifer Witten
LifeBridge Health, Vice President Government Relations
Jwitten2@lifehealth.org

Children's National Testimony - HB 583 - Katie Don

Uploaded by: Austin Morris

Position: FAV



111 Michigan Ave NW
Washington, DC 20010-2916
ChildrensNational.org

Testimony of Katie Donnelly, MD, MPH
Associate Professor of Pediatrics and Emergency Medicine
Medical Director, Youth Violence Intervention Program
Children's National Hospital
before
House Judiciary Committee
IN SUPPORT OF
HB 583: Center for Firearm Violence Prevention – Establishment

February 14, 2024

Chairman Clippinger, Vice Chair Bartlett and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in favor of House Bill 583. My name is Katie Donnelly, MD, MPH, and I am the Medical Director of the Youth Violence Intervention Program and Associate Professor of Pediatrics and Emergency Medicine at Children's National Hospital. Children's National has been serving the nation's children since 1870. Nearly 60% of our patients are residents of Maryland, and we maintain a network of community-based pediatric practices, surgery centers and regional outpatient centers in Maryland.

Our Youth Violence Intervention Program serves children who have been shot, stabbed or seriously physically assaulted who seek care in our Emergency Department. Violence does not respect state lines, and though our Emergency Department is located in DC, we have served more than one hundred Maryland children for assault injuries in the past year, including 12 children that had been injured by firearms. Yet we know that this grossly underestimates the number of Maryland children injured by gun violence. Per the Gun Violence Archive, thirty-seven children were killed due to firearms in Maryland in 2023.¹ This number includes two two-year-olds, a six-year-old and a twelve-year-old. Another one hundred and forty were injured. Clearly, these preventable deaths and injuries should spur us to find solutions.

¹ The Gun Violence Archive.2024. Accessed February 8th 2024. <https://gunviolencearchive.org/query>.

House Bill 583 will help address this tide of violent injury for our young people by establishing a Center for Firearm Violence Prevention. This Center can direct research into and the implementation of evidence-based solutions to prevent gun violence. The Center can also support proven solutions, such as the hospital-based violence intervention programs already in place at Maryland hospitals. The requirement for a state plan to address gun violence is also appreciated, as it fosters a long-term approach to this public health challenge. I am grateful that this bill aims to incorporate the recommendations and thoughts of communities highly impacted by gun violence. I would also recommend considering compensating those communities for sharing their experiences. Too often we expect unpaid labor from those who have been disproportionately impacted by violence.

Looking ahead, I would encourage the future Center leadership to consider these additional points. One, as mentioned above, violence does not respect state, county or city borders. How will the Center foster collaboration with programs both in the state of Maryland, the region, and across the United States? What we learn in Maryland could help in other states. Two, how can we support all who are impacted by gun violence? Too many of the children I see in my day-to-day work as an Emergency Medicine physician have lost a parent to gun violence, or have seen multiple siblings shot, or fear going to school because of gun violence. It affects families and entire communities. The proposed solution should too. Three, how do we ensure that the specific and unique needs of children are addressed by the Center? Addressing their needs today is critical to stemming the tide of violence in the future.

I applaud the efforts of the Governor and the Maryland General Assembly for prioritizing this groundbreaking legislation and for making Firearm Violence Prevention and Intervention a top priority. I respectfully request a favorable report on House Bill 583.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. I am happy to respond to any questions you may have.

HB583 GOCPP Supports.pdf

Uploaded by: Bethany Young

Position: FAV

WES MOORE
Governor

ARUNA MILLER
Lieutenant Governor



DOROTHY LENNIG
Executive Director

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 583

February 14, 2024

Bethany Young, Director of Policy and Legislation

The Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy's (GOCPP) role is to advise the Governor on criminal justice strategies, coordinate across public safety agencies, and allocate resources Statewide to support public safety.

House Bill 583 establishes a Center for Firearm Violence Prevention charged with coordinating a Statewide public health approach to reducing firearm violence and the harm it causes. It is unconscionable that firearm injuries are the leading cause of death for children in our nation. Gun violence is an epidemic warranting all of the resources we have at our disposal. Creating the Center is a critical step towards making Maryland safer.

GOCPP looks forward to collaborating with the Center and other State, local, and federal partners on a whole-of-government approach to reducing gun violence.

GOCPP urges the House Judiciary Committee to report favorably on House Bill 583.

HB0583_Center_for_Firearm_Violence_Prevention_MLC_

Uploaded by: Cecilia Plante

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY FOR HB0583
Center for Firearm Violence Prevention - Establishment

Bill Sponsor: Speaker

Committee: Judiciary

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: **FAVORABLE**

I am submitting this testimony in strong support of HB0583 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Firearm violence is escalating across the country due to the proliferation of firearms and the lack of laws that restrict use. Mass shootings are becoming commonplace and the number of residents, including children, who have died as a result of firearm violence has risen almost exponentially. Firearm violence has risen to the level of a public health crisis and we should treat it as such.

This bill, if enacted, would establish the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention in the Maryland Department of Health to reduce firearm violence, and misuse of firearms in the State by partnering with federal, State, and local agencies and affected communities to implement a public health approach to firearm violence reduction. It also requires the Center to submit a preliminary State Plan for a public health approach to reducing firearm violence by May 1, 2025.

We strongly support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.

Gun Violence Center Testimony HB 583 2 14 24 final

Uploaded by: Clinton Wolcott

Position: FAV



**TESTIMONY OF THE CRITICAL ISSUES FORUM: ADVOCACY
FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
ON FEBRUARY 14, 2024,
BEFORE THE HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 583, REGARDING THE CREATION OF
A CENTER FOR FIREARMS VIOLENCE PREVENTION**

Honorable Chair Luke Clippinger, Vice-Chair Sandy Bartlett, and Members of the Committee:

The Critical Issues Forum: Advocacy for Social Justice (CIF), provides this testimony in support of HB 583, which would establish a Center for Firearm Violence Prevention and Intervention within the Maryland Department of Health. We applaud Governor Moore's initiative to address the staggering toll that gun violence exacts in Maryland through a coordinated public health approach that addresses both the causes and effects of this problem.

CIF is a coalition of three synagogues, Temple Beth Ami, Kol Shalom, and Adat Shalom, that include over 1,750 households and three denominations of Judaism: Reform, Conservative, and Reconstructionist. CIF serves as a vehicle for our congregations to speak out on policy issues, such as gun violence prevention, that relate to our shared values, including the Jewish traditions that emphasizes the sanctity and primary value of human life.

The severity of Maryland's gun violence problem is undeniable. According to the most recent statistics compiled by Everytown for Gun Safety, Maryland suffers an average of almost 800 firearms fatalities each year and the rate of gun deaths rose over 50% from 2012 to 2022.¹ Perhaps the most disturbing element of this crisis is its effect on our children. Firearms are the leading cause of death in children and youth ages 1 to 21 in Maryland and the United States, surpassing injuries and death from motor vehicle crashes.² In Maryland, 131 children and teens died by gun violence in 2021, more than twice the number of deaths from motor vehicle

¹ <https://www.everytown.org/state/maryland/>

² CDC WISQARS On-line Causes of Injury-Related Death Data Base, Violence-related Firearm Deaths; Both Sexes; Age Range: 1 – 21; All Races and Ethnicity; US and Maryland; 2021.

crashes.³ Thirteen percent (13%) of the firearm deaths in Maryland were by suicide and 84% were homicides.⁴

The “whole-of-government” public health approach to reducing firearms violence outlined in Section 5203 of HB 582 offers an effective strategy for coordinating and enhancing both governmental efforts and the many effective community organizations that have been working so diligently to prevent gun violence and to deal with its results. It is clear that our state will not solve this problem solely through law enforcement strategies, and Section 5203’s focus on strengthening “evidence-based firearms violence prevention strategies” is likely to be very effective.

This evidence-based approach will allow the state to focus resources on communities hardest hit by gun violence. While gun violence affects the entire state, it is concentrated in low-income communities without adequate economic infrastructure. For example, Baltimore City’s gun homicide rate is 44.17 per 100,000 people⁵, compared to 8.9 statewide.⁶ This wide discrepancy in gun violence statistics is similar in other U.S. jurisdictions, where cities with the highest gun death rates and highest increase over time had higher proportions of residents living in poverty, higher rates of unemployment, and were more racially segregated than other communities.⁷

There are a wide variety of community-based programs that have proved effective in reducing gun violence and reducing its toll on individuals, including:

- Hospital Based Violence Intervention Programs that reach individuals immediately after they are injured and form relationships designed to reduce trauma and the risk of retaliation;
- Street Outreach Programs that interrupt cycles of violent conflict using credible messengers who act as mediators to prevent shootings, provide crisis response, and connect high-risk people with long-term support;
- Gun Violence Reduction Strategies that involve a partnership between law enforcement and communities to intervene with individuals at the highest risk of committing violence;
- Offices of Neighborhood Safety that take a holistic approach to neighborhood health and safety; and
- Suicide Prevention and Domestic Violence Victims Support Organizations.

³ Ibid

⁴ Ibid

⁵ <https://bigcitieshealthdata.org/compare/?city=2&cities=3&metrics=11-01-03&years=&groups=&sort=name&geoSt rata=>

⁶ <https://www.everytown.org/state/maryland/>

⁷ [Gun Deaths in Big Cities | Urban Health Collaborative | Drexel University](#)

These are a few examples of the kinds of programs that will benefit from the Center for Violence Prevention created by this bill. Health care professionals, local government agencies, and faith-based charitable organizations will also benefit from the training and technical assistance provided for in the bill.

For these reasons, CIF recommends a favorable report on HB 583.

HB583.pdf

Uploaded by: Edith Perry

Position: FAV

HB 583 Center for Firearm Violence Prevention — Establishment
Favorable Testimony of National Coalition of 100 Black Women Prince George's County

February 1st, 2024

Good Afternoon, Chairman, Vice Chair, and members of the Judiciary Committee: I am pleased to present House Bill 583 Center for Firearm Violence Prevention — Establishment. This bill would address Maryland's high levels of firearm violence affecting communities with primarily people of color. HB 583 combats gun violence by establishing the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention in the Maryland Department of Health and partnering with local governments and community-based gun violence intervention programs.

Firearm violence in Maryland remains alarmingly high. According to the CDC, Maryland firearm injury death rate is 15.2 per 100,000, totaling 915 deaths in 2021. Of these victims, an average of 67 children and teens die every year as a result of firearm violence (Everytown). Firearm deaths are preventable. We must create evidence-based policies and programs that protect Marylanders against gun violence and save lives by collaborating with local government, advocacy groups, and medical professionals. Through this means, the work will be done in consultation with the governor's office or any relevant agency, to ensure a whole-of-government approach to reducing firearm violence.

On May 1, 2025, the Center will submit a preliminary state plan for a public health approach to reducing firearm violence to guide the work of the center to the governor and the general assembly. On May 1, 2029, and every 4 years thereafter, the Center will submit a state strategic plan for firearm violence reduction using public health strategies to the governor and the general assembly. The bill would take effect on October 1, 2024. For funding, the Center may apply for, receive, and spend federal grants-in-aid or any other federal funds made available to the department for use in carrying out the powers and duties of the secretary or the department.

Our neighboring states have already taken the initiative to prevent gun violence. In New Jersey, the Attorney General announced a first in the nation office dedicated to bringing civil enforcement actions against firearm companies to hold them accountable for violations of the law that harm the health and safety of New Jersey residents. In September 2022, through an administrative directive the Attorney General created a new division within the department called the Division of Violence Intervention and Victim Assistance. This was a unified strategy for public safety that brought together services for victims. In the state of New York, the Red Flag Law, also known as the extreme risk protection order law, protects individuals who show signs of being a threat to themselves or others from purchasing or possessing any kind of firearm.

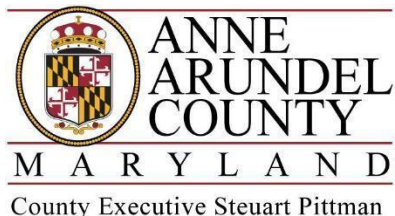
Establishing the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention is a preemptive way to address firearm violence within our state. Implementing a public health approach to firearm violence reduction brings together the community, professionals, and lawmakers and saves lives. By implementing a public health approach with the joint support of the community, professionals, and lawmakers we will reduce firearm violence.

Thank you for the opportunity to present HB 583, and I respectfully request your support.

Anne Arundel County _FAV_HB583 (1).pdf

Uploaded by: Ethan Hunt

Position: FAV



February 14, 2024

House Bill 583

Center for Firearm Violence Prevention - Establishment

House Judiciary Committee

Position: FAVORABLE

Anne Arundel County **SUPPORTS** House Bill 583 – Center for Firearm Violence Prevention - Establishment. This Bill would establish the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention in the Maryland Department of Health to partner with federal, state, and local agencies and affected communities to reduce firearm violence, harm from firearm violence, and misuse of firearms in the State through a public health approach.

In the first year of my first term, we established the Gun Violence Prevention Task Force (GVPTF), comprised of individuals representing a broad spectrum of experience and expertise in public safety, emergency operations, behavioral health and community outreach. The GVPTF was tasked with researching how the public health system could be used to address individuals in need of behavioral health services who may be at risk to commit or be the victim of gun violence and produce actionable recommendations to reduce gun violence in Anne Arundel County. Recognizing that gun violence is a public health crisis, the task force’s final report¹ included 55 recommendations, including the establishment of a collaborative body of government and non-government agencies to coordinate gun violence initiatives within Anne Arundel County and to implement the recommendations of the Task Force.

This critical piece of legislation takes the same approach that we have taken in Anne Arundel County at the state level to reduce gun violence, including firearm related homicides and suicides. By partnering with stakeholders across government and communities, and addressing gun violence as a public health crisis rather than a political one, we can make real meaningful progress towards reducing our tragically high rate of gun violence and make all of our communities safer.

For all of these reasons, I respectfully request a **FAVORABLE** report on House Bill 583.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Steuart Pittman".

Steuart Pittman
County Executive

¹ Available at:
<https://www.aacounty.org/sites/default/files/2023-07/gun-violence-task-force-final-report-20200605.pdf>

MD Catholic Conference_HB 583_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Garrett O'Day

Position: FAV



**MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE**

February 14, 2024

HB 583

Center for Firearm Violence Prevention – Establishment

House Judiciary Committee

Position: FAVORABLE

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this testimony in support of House Bill 583. The Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals and numerous charities combine to form our state’s second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

House Bill 583 would establish the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention with the Maryland Department of Health. The statutory goals of the Center will be to reduce firearm violence and misuse of firearms in the state by partnering with federal, state, and local agencies and affected communities to implement a public health approach to firearm violence reduction.

In 2022, a contingent of bishop chairmen from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), including our Maryland conference chairman Archbishop Lori of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, called the United States Congress to action on gun violence. Therein, the bishops stated “There is something deeply wrong with a culture where these acts of violence are increasingly common. There must be dialogue followed by concrete action to bring about a broader social renewal that addresses all aspects of the crisis, including mental health, the state of families, the valuation of life, the influence of entertainment and gaming industries, bullying, and the availability of firearms. Among the many steps toward addressing this endemic of violence is the passage of reasonable gun control measures.”

The Conference supports this legislation an important step in the right direction toward curbing gun violence in our state. Reflective of the bishop’s statement above, this legislation mandates a “public health” approach to gun violence prevention and will promote the necessary study, deliberation, and conversations for the state to formulate best practices regarding gun violence.

The Conference supports holistic, restorative policies that propose commonsense limitations on access to lethal weapons that endanger entire communities. When community members are not in fear of their lives, they can live up to their God-given potential and enrich the world around them. Every person has a right to life, and the Conference will continue to work to

combat violence and promote a culture of peace. Banning dangerous and lethal weapons such as untraceable firearms is a manageable and efficient way to curb the rising culture of violence. It is for these reasons that we request a favorable report on House Bill 583.

2024 MSCA HB 583 House Side FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Holly Kleiderlein

Position: FAV



Committee: **Judiciary**

Bill Number: **House Bill 583 – Center for Firearm Violence Prevention – Establishment**

Hearing Date: **February 14, 2024**

Position: **Support**

The Maryland School Counselor Association (MSCA) – a professional organization of over 900 counselors who work with students in pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade in public, private, charter, and magnet school settings. MSCA supports government action to address the horrific and preventable violence that has plagued our State and taken the lives of students and school personnel. Therefore, we support ***House Bill 583 – Center for Firearm Violence Prevention – Establishment.***

Gun violence is the leading cause of premature death in the United States. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2018) reported that an average of seven children and teens are killed with guns in the United States every day. School counselors collaborate with school staff and the community to ensure students attend schools where the environment is conducive to teaching and learning. To support the work of school counselors and school staff, schools and communities should be free from gun violence and threats.

We are grateful for leadership of the Moore-Miller Administration in establishing an office that will consolidate and better coordinate the State’s public health approach to preventing gun violence. Statewide coordination throughout sectors will help to address this crisis that threatens the safety of our schools.

We ask for a favorable report. If we can provide any additional information, please contact Jocelyn I. Collins at jcollins@policypartners.net.

HB 583 - JUD - MDH -LOS .pdf

Uploaded by: Jason Caplan

Position: FAV



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

February 14, 2024

The Honorable Luke Clippinger
Chair, House Judiciary Committee
Room 101, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

RE: House Bill 583- Center for Firearm Violence Prevention- Establishment

Dear Chair Clippinger and Committee members:

The Maryland Department of Health (Department) respectfully submits this letter of support for House Bill (HB) 583, which establishes the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention in the Department. The mission of the Center shall be to reduce firearm violence, harm from firearm violence, and misuse of firearms in Maryland by partnering with federal, state, and local agencies and affected communities to implement a public health approach to violence reduction.

The establishment of the Center advances Governor Moore's mission to make Maryland a State that is safe and the State Plan priority of creating safer communities. The center builds upon the violence prevention strategy and work of the Department and will complement the work of the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy and other State agencies. The Department's strategy, and the work of the Center, focuses on applying a public health framework to interventions across the lifespan, understanding that interventions can work upstream, especially for impacting the risk of youth violence.

The current work of the Department addresses victims of violence on a continuum, in real time through post recovery, including the long-term effects of trauma. The current strategy works across the administrations of the Department; the establishment of the Center will enhance the current work to not only focus it but leverage other state agencies to assist in data collection efforts.

The Department strongly supports HB 583. The establishment of the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention will not only focus current strategy at the Department but will allow for coordinated cross agency and office collaboration.

If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Sarah Case-Herron, Director of Governmental Affairs at sarah.case-herron@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H.
Secretary

2024 SUPPORT House Bill 583.pdf

Uploaded by: Jenifer Pauliukonis

Position: FAV

HB 583
Favorable

TO: The Honorable Luke Clippinger, Chair
House Judiciary Committee

FROM: Jen Pauliukonis
Director of Policy and Programming, Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions

DATE: February 14, 2024

RE: House Bill 583: Establishment of the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention

Johns Hopkins University and Medicine urges a **favorable** report on **House Bill 583 – Establishment of the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention**. The office will be created within the Maryland Department of Health and will take a public health approach to preventing gun violence.

As the Director of Policy and Programming for the Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions, I am very happy to support this legislation. Our Center conducts and translates rigorous research to inform effective policy solutions, and develops, advocates for, and defends equitable and innovative policies and programs to end the epidemic of gun violence. The new office will align well with the work of the Center for Gun Violence Solutions.

I want to first differentiate between my own organization and the program described in the bill, the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention. Our university-based organization is a part of the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and employs expert faculty and staff to study the impacts of gun violence prevention and develop and strengthen policy solutions both at the federal and state level. The Center for Firearm Violence Prevention established in House Bill 583 within the Maryland Department of Health will serve as a hub between a variety of federal, state, and local agencies to ensure Maryland's firearm-related laws are fully implemented and life-saving community violence intervention programs are funded and evaluated.

Currently, 8 states and the District of Columbia, as well as dozens of counties and municipalities, have offices of gun violence prevention. These offices build the infrastructure to effectively address the crisis of gun violence in a comprehensive manner, including by supporting community-based organizations saving lives on the ground.

The Center for Firearm Violence Prevention in House Bill 583 seeks to utilize the public health approach to reduce gun deaths and injuries across the state of Maryland. Using public health to address violence

and injury requires using evidence and data to understand what causes violence and develop evidence-informed solutions. The Center for Firearm Violence Prevention will:

- Acquire data and statistics and collaborate with research institutions for analysis to improve laws and programs;
- Facilitate coordination between federal agencies and a variety of state agencies, such as the Maryland Health Department, the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention, victim Services, local and county municipalities, and law enforcement;
- Provide technical assistance and model processes for community violence intervention programs in impacted communities;
- Create public awareness campaigns;
- Leverage federal and state resources to strengthen grant programs for a variety of violence reduction programs and crisis intervention; and
- Collaborate with communities most impacted by gun violence.

While many of the state-level offices of gun violence prevention are new and there is limited research on their effectiveness, one promising example is the Safe and Successful Youth Initiative (SSYI) created within the Massachusetts's governor's office in 2011. While the full scope of the initiative is more narrowly focused on evidence-informed youth and community violence intervention programs, it serves as a collaborative between the governor's office, local law enforcement, and youth violence reduction programs. The SSYI works to funnel key state and federal funding to these intervention programs and develop ongoing process and impact evaluations to ensure accountability. The SSYI conducted a multi-year comprehensive evaluation published in 2020. The researchers compared the cities that were a part of the SSYI program to other cities outside the program and found fewer rates of violent crime among youth aged 14-24 years of age and saved the state over \$32 million annually in violent crime victimization costs¹. The evaluation was so successful, that the original 11 cities within the program has now been expanded to 14. The vision for Maryland's Center for Firearm Violence Prevention is even more bold and comprehensive than the Massachusetts example.

Johns Hopkins University and our Center fully support the comprehensive and holistic scope of House Bill 583, which will address all types of gun violence in Maryland including firearm suicide, domestic violence, community violence, and mass violence. By using a public health lens for the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention, system actors will be able to fully understand the size and scope of the gun violence epidemic, which factors most put our communities at risk, and which laws and programs are most effective at keeping our communities safe. Maryland has enacted an array of evidence-informed gun laws, such as extreme risk protective orders, handgun purchaser licensing, and child access prevention laws. The creation of the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention will strengthen the collaboration and enforcement of the laws currently on the books, thus increasing the impacts of those laws and saving lives. It will also ensure that key data is shared between different agencies and reduce duplicative work being conducted on the issues of gun violence prevention to improve results and save

crucial resources in the efforts to reduce gun violence.

The Center for Gun Violence Solutions and all of Johns Hopkins University and Medicine stands ready to support this Administration's efforts to prevent and reduce gun violence in the State of Maryland.

Accordingly, Johns Hopkins respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE** committee report on **House Bill 583**.

ⁱ The Massachusetts Safe and Successful Youth Initiative: A Promising Statewide Approach to Youth Gun and Gang Violence in the Fall 2020 issue of Translational Criminology (p 7-9).

HB 583, FAV, FCG OCE, LS24.pdf

Uploaded by: Jessica Fitzwater

Position: FAV



FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT
OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Jessica Fitzwater
County Executive

HB 583 – Center for Firearm Violence Prevention - Establishment

DATE: February 14, 2024
COMMITTEE: House Judiciary Committee
POSITION: Favorable
FROM: The Office of Frederick County Executive Jessica Fitzwater

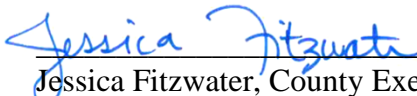
As the County Executive of Frederick County, I urge the committee to give HB 583 – Center for Firearm Violence Prevention - Establishment a favorable report.

This bill will establish the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention to reduce firearm violence, harm from firearm violence, and misuse of firearms in the State.

The creation of a statewide Center for Firearm Violence Prevention is the first step in implementing a whole-of-government approach to reducing gun violence in Maryland. The Center, housed in the Department of Health, will work with Federal, State, and local agencies to promote the development of evidence-based firearm violence prevention initiatives in affected communities. By working with these agencies, the Center will have the ability to ensure no community is left behind and efforts are focused in areas that have been disproportionately impacted by the firearm violence crisis.

HB 583 is vital to ensuring the reduction in firearm violence and harm to Maryland's children. The established Center will be charged with working with government and non-government stakeholders in communities to create a plan to reduce firearm violence through data collection, information sharing, and research. This is essential in ensuring that all aspects of this crisis are evaluated, and a meaningful plan may be crafted by the Center. This bill, and the work conducted by the Center, carry the potential to make Maryland a leader in firearm violence prevention.

As a mother of two, a 17-year educator, and now the County Executive of the fastest growing school district in Maryland, making our community safer from gun violence is a top priority for me. Thank you for your consideration of HB 583. I urge you to advance this bill with a favorable report.



Jessica Fitzwater, County Executive
Frederick County, MD

Center Testimony (SB475_HB583) 2024-2.pdf

Uploaded by: Karen Herren

Position: FAV



marylanders
to prevent
gun violence



Testimony in **Support** of
Center for Firearm Violence Prevention - Establishment
SB 475/HB 583

Karen Herren, Executive Director of Marylanders to Prevent Gun Violence and Co-lead of the
Maryland Violence Prevention Coalition

Tarria Stanley, Northeast Regional Advocacy Manager, Community Justice and Co-lead of the
Maryland Violence Prevention Coalition

February 14, 2024

Dear Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Bartlett, and distinguished members of the Committee,

On behalf of Marylanders to Prevent Gun Violence (MPGV), Community Justice, and the Maryland Violence Prevention Coalition (MVPC), we are writing in support of **SB475/HB 583** for the establishment of a Center for Firearm Violence Prevention and Intervention within the Maryland Department of Health.

As advocates and organizations deeply committed to reducing violence and improving living conditions across our state, we believe that urgent action is needed to address the crisis of gun violence through a comprehensive public health approach.

Maryland, despite its relatively strong gun safety laws, continues to experience a devastating toll of gun violence. On average, 796 lives are lost and 1,363 individuals are wounded by firearms in our state each year. In 2021 that number skyrocketed to more than 900. The impact of this violence is felt across our communities, exacerbating existing disparities and perpetuating cycles of fear and trauma. While law enforcement undoubtedly plays a critical role in addressing gun violence, we must adopt a broader perspective to proactively prevent such incidents and tackle their underlying causes.

A public health approach offers an effective and sustainable path forward. By prioritizing prevention, intervention, and community engagement, we can disrupt the cycles of violence and create safer, healthier communities for all Marylanders. The proposed Center for Firearm Violence Prevention and Intervention would serve as a vital resource for coordinating efforts between federal, state, and local agencies, facilitating data collection and research, and developing best practices for community violence intervention programs.

Through our coalition's collaborative efforts, we have seen the power of evidence-based strategies to reduce gun violence. Programs such as street outreach, gun violence reduction strategies, safe



storage campaigns, and hospital-based violence intervention programs have demonstrated promising results in communities across the country. By investing in these proven approaches and increasing resources for community-based programs, we can make meaningful progress towards reducing gun violence in Maryland. Establishing a Center for Firearm Violence Prevention and Intervention represents a critical step towards building a more equitable and functional infrastructure for violence prevention in our state.

Following this testimony are two attachments. **Attachment A** is a list of coalition partners signing onto this testimony. **Attachment B** is a White Paper prepared by the coalition last year articulating and analyzing the approach to and recommendations for this public health approach to gun violence. We urge a **FAVORABLE** report on **SB475** to establish a Center for Firearm Violence Prevention and Intervention within the Maryland Department of Health. By embracing a public health approach and investing in community-driven solutions, we can create a safer and more just Maryland for generations to come.

###

***Marylanders to Prevent Gun Violence** is a statewide program, education, and advocacy organization dedicated to reducing gun deaths and injuries in Maryland. In addition to our advocacy work, we run a grief support program for impacted elementary aged children in Baltimore, educate on gun safety and gun laws, and co-lead the Maryland Violence Prevention Coalition.*

***Community Justice** is a Black and Brown, survivor-led national organization that focuses on empowering communities closest to the pain inflicted by gun violence. We see gun violence as a public health crisis, and we are advocating for a public health approach that centers communities directly impacted by this crisis and implements evidence-informed strategies to intervene and prevent violence.*

*The **Maryland Violence Prevention Coalition** is a program co-chaired by Marylanders to Prevent Gun Violence and Community Justice. We seek to elevate the work of groups working on the ground in communities and across Maryland to prevent, interrupt, and address violence. MVPC is currently composed of over 80 community members that includes activists, social service providers, healthcare practitioners, survivors of gun violence, policy advocates, concerned citizens, violence prevention practitioners, researchers, law enforcement, community violence interrupters, and scholars.*

*Karen Herren
Executive Director, Marylanders to Prevent Gun Violence*

*Tarria Stanley
Northeast Regional Advocacy Manager, Community Justice*



ATTACHMENT A

Below is a list of member signatories from individuals and organizations comprising the Maryland Violence Prevention Coalition. These dedicated individuals and groups stand united in our collective pursuit of safer communities and the prevention of gun violence. Their support underscores the urgent need for legislative action and reaffirms our shared commitment to advancing public health solutions to gun violence in Maryland¹.

1. Karen Herren, Executive Director Marylanders to Prevent Gun Violence
2. Tarria Stanley, Northeast Regional Advocacy Manager, Community Justice
3. Kyle Fischer, MD, MPH, Policy Director, The Health Alliance for Violence Intervention
4. Phyllis Gray, Assistant VP of Care Transformation, MedStar Health
5. Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence
6. Coren Eve Makell, an African American Annapolitan
7. Lydia C. Watts, Executive Director, Rebuild, Overcome, and Rise (ROAR) at the University of Maryland, Baltimore
8. Enough of Gun Violence
9. Nadine Finigan-Carr, Executive Director of the UMB Center for Violence Prevention
10. Woodie Kessel, MD, MPH; Assistant Surgeon General, USPHS, (Ret); Co-Director, University of Maryland Prevent Gun Violence: Research, Empowerment, Strategies and Solutions (UMD PROGRESS Initiative)
11. Critical Issues Forum (CIF)
12. Heather Warnken, Executive Director, Center for Criminal Justice Reform, University of Baltimore School of Law
13. Center for Criminal Justice Reform, University of Baltimore School of Law
14. March for Our Lives
15. Dante' Johnson, Director of Community Safety Initiatives, Living Classrooms Foundation
16. Brady United, Montgomery County, MD Chapter
17. Lifebridge Health, Center for Hope
18. Lifebridge Health
19. Shantay Jackson, Violence Reduction Project Manager, Former Executive Director of Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement, Baltimore City
20. Dr. Joseph B. Richardson, Co-Director, University of Maryland Prevent Gun Violence: Research, Empowerment, Strategies and Solutions (UMD PROGRESS Initiative)
21. Advance Maryland

¹ Not all of our member participants possess the organizational authority to publicly endorse legislation, even if they have actively contributed to our collective efforts toward a cause such as in this case. The Coalition only signs on as a collective when the underlying effort is broadly endorsed by all members. We currently have over 80 active members from around the state.



22. Dr. Lucas C. Carlson, MD, MPH, Regional Medical Director, Care Transformation - MedStar Health
23. Reverend Greta Willis, Baltimore Youth Grief Support Program Director, Marylanders to Prevent Gun Violence, Founder of the Kevin L. Cooper Foundation
24. Kathy Wagner-Kosmakos, R.N., M.S.N., Program Director for the Department of Care Coordination and Clinical Resource Management, Johns Hopkins Hospital
25. City of Annapolis, NO HARM VIPP
26. Roca
27. Giffords
28. Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence
29. R Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center

ATTACHMENT B

2023 Action Plan Gun Violence in our Communities

A Public Health Problem. A Public Health Approach.

Maryland is ahead of the curve on many public health measures. Unfortunately, it is woefully behind on preventing and meaningfully addressing gun violence. This is despite the fact that Maryland’s gun safety laws are strong compared to many other states. Across Maryland, 796 people die from gun violence and another 1,363 are wounded each year. Gun violence has increased 39 percent nationwide since 2012, yet the increase in Maryland has been 54 percent. We have the ninth highest rate of gun homicides in the nation.²

This violence is affecting the health and well-being of every community from Western Maryland to the Eastern Shore. Communities hardest hit by unrelenting violence, including many low income, Black and Brown communities, have suffered from decades of disinvestment. Baltimore City’s gun homicide rate is a stunning 44.17³ per 100,000 people, compared to 8.9⁴ statewide. This wide discrepancy mirrors the differences in gun violence in other U.S. cities. Those cities with the highest rates of gun violence have higher proportions of residents living in poverty, higher rates of unemployment, and are generally more racially segregated than other cities.⁵

What does this mean for Maryland? Our communities are afraid. Children are afraid to go to school. Adults are afraid to go to work or even the grocery store. People are afraid to live their everyday lives. The result is a cycle of violence and fear that is escalating.

Gun Violence is Eroding Our Health and Our Lives.

The impact of gun violence on Marylanders is profound. Violence, as well as the fear of violence, is taking a huge toll on the quality of our lives.

- More than 120,000 Americans are killed or injured by guns every year in this country.
- 75 percent of young people between ages 15 and 21 say that mass shootings are a significant source of stress.⁶
- Gun violence costs Maryland \$10.5 billion per year; \$383.9 million of this is paid by taxpayers – about \$1,731 per resident.⁷

Maryland Needs a Public Health Approach to Gun Violence.

Maryland needs a public health approach to reduce gun violence in our communities. In its recent *New York Rifle & Pistol Ass’n v. Bruen*⁸ ruling, the U.S. Supreme Court limited states’ ability to place legal guardrails around gun ownership. While the exact number of guns in circulation in the U.S. is hard to

² [EveryStat](#)

³ <https://bigcitieshealthdata.org/compare/?city=2&cities=3&metrics=11-01-03&years=&groups=&sort=name&geoStata=>

⁴ [EveryStat](#)

⁵ [Gun Deaths in Big Cities | Urban Health Collaborative | Drexel University](#)

⁶ [What Gun Violence Does to Our Mental Health - The New York Times](#)

⁷ These costs include healthcare, law enforcement and criminal justice related, and costs to employers and lost income. See <https://everystat.org/#Maryland>

⁸ https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/21pdf/20-843_7j80.pdf



ascertain, we know that the number of guns produced each year has increased steadily over time. While gun ownership rates have remained consistent over time,⁹ gun manufacturing rates have risen steadily.¹⁰ A conservative estimation concludes that there are currently around 352 million guns in circulation in this country.¹¹

How can policymakers address the violence that results from the large number of guns in our society? It is clear from the news and the lived experience of countless Marylanders that a continued overreliance on police, prosecution, and prisons is not working. Law enforcement is mostly limited to responding to gun violence *after it occurs*. This cannot be the crux of our strategy to prevent gun violence. We need to find better ways.

Public health is about prevention. And the peer-reviewed research is clear. We can lower gun violence with evidence-based strategies that prevent and disrupt the cycles. This paper describes the types of programs that may be included in a public health approach to gun violence and then lays out what needs to happen in Maryland to most effectively make use of these strategies.

There are Successful Public Health Gun Violence Prevention Programs.

Below we describe a few examples of the many programs that employ a public health approach to addressing gun violence. These programs apply public health principles to interrupt the spread of violence based on the concept that violent behaviors are transmitted in ways that are similar to the spread of infectious diseases. With infectious disease, the more relationships a person has with sick people, the more likely they are to be infected. The longer it has been since exposure, the less likely infection becomes. Violence operates in very similar ways. By weaving together demographic risks such as age, sex, and neighborhood with time since violence exposure, we can think about how we might make changes in order to interrupt violence.

Street Outreach

Street outreach programs interrupt cycles of violent conflict using credible messengers who act as mediators to prevent shootings, provide real-time crisis response, and connect high-risk people with long-term supports to promote behavior change. Street outreach programs have been rigorously evaluated by numerous independent think tanks, with strong, statistically significant outcomes observed in most analyses. Reductions in shootings have ranged from 40 to 70 percent, with some cities even able to maintain multiple years without any shootings at all. Analyses have also shown that anywhere from \$3,500-\$4,500 is saved for every act of violence stopped. Apart from these tangible results, supplementary benefits in the form of increased employment rates and more faith in law enforcement personnel are also realized.¹²

- Some of the hardest hit communities in the U.S., Latin America, and the Caribbean have reduced shootings and killings by 40-70 percent by using street outreach strategies. In some instances,

⁹ [What Percentage of Americans Own Guns?](#) 32% of U.S. adults say they personally own a gun and 44% report living in a gun household.

¹⁰ “American gunmakers produced more than 9 million guns a year on average between 2016 and 2020 and U.S. entities imported another almost 5 million firearms annually on average. By 2020, 11 million guns were being produced annually and another 6.8 million imported.” [How Many Guns Are Circulating in the U.S.?](#) <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/e/2PACX-1vShiwPP36HrjUyPztuIhoYjR3Xd3uhlQivMC3wPSNq1UCjVbj2wsPZIIISqOtEQ0NbVVwwKBzyrDNuCz/pubhtml#>

¹¹ [How Many Guns Are Circulating in the U.S.?](#)

¹² [Publications – NICJR](#) and [Estimating the Effects of Safe Streets Baltimore on Gun Violence](#)

shootings and killings have plummeted by 90 percent and have almost eliminated retaliatory violence in some communities. Several previously highly violent neighborhoods have had months-long streaks with no homicides or shootings.

- In 2017, an evaluation by the John Jay College of Criminal Justice recorded a 63 percent decrease in shootings within New York’s South Bronx district. In 2020, ICESI University, in Cali, Colombia, found that killings in Cali’s Charco Azul community declined by 47 percent. In over a dozen other cities, studies have shown a downward trend in violent behavior, primarily associated with street outreach intervention.¹³

Gun Violence Reduction Strategies (GVRS)

GVRS, sometimes referred to as “focused deterrence” or “group violence intervention” works as a partnership between law enforcement and communities to intervene with individuals at highest risk of committing acts of violence. This strategy pairs community leaders and law enforcement to high risk individuals employing a “carrots and sticks” approach. Participants are warned of swift criminal sanctions for violent behaviors while simultaneously being offered tangible benefits for those who engage in peace such as job training, drug treatment, and other social services.

- Oakland’s GVRS, which was launched at the end of 2012, resulted in six consecutive years of reductions in shootings and homicides, culminating in a 49 percent reduction in fatal and non-fatal shootings. Toward the end of March 2020, before Covid-19 shelter-in-place restrictions were imposed, homicides were down by 38 percent year-to-date from 2019. Had Oakland maintained that low rate, it would have achieved the lowest murder rate in the city’s history. But like nearly every city in the country, Oakland experienced a spike in shootings and homicides once the Covid-19 restrictions caused outreach and services to cease operation.¹⁴ More recently, positive results in Baltimore’s Western District led to GVRS launching in Southwestern District.¹⁵

Hospital-Based Violence Intervention Programs (HVIPs)

HVIPs are programs that reach individuals immediately after they have been injured and continue their care beyond hospital discharge. HVIPs accomplish this with violence prevention professionals, a form of credible messenger who receives additional training to work within health systems. They meet with the patient at bedside following injury and initiate a long-term care relationship to decrease risk factors for violence while bolstering protective factors. This typically requires addressing a wide range of needs ranging from mental health services to jobs, housing, and education.

- Caught in the Crossfire is an HVIP program based in Oakland, CA, and was among the first HVIPs in the country. Its intervention specialists connect with injured youth at Oakland’s Highland Hospital. An evaluation conducted in 2004 found that the program reduced the probability of re-arrest six months after injury by 70 percent.
- Baltimore’s Shock Trauma’s Violence Intervention Program (VIP) showed in a randomized control trial that the program lowered the risk of repeat violent injury from 36 to 5 percent. It also decreased the risk that participants would be incarcerated in the future, resulting in significant

¹³ [Multiple Studies: Cure Violence Works](#)

¹⁴ [Publications – NICJR and Oakland’s Successful Gun Violence Reduction Strategy](#)

¹⁵ [What caused a 33% drop in gun violence in West Baltimore last year? We analyzed it and BPD releases Year 4 Review of Crime Reduction & Departmental Transformational Plan | Baltimore Police Department](#)



financial savings.¹⁶ With violence being the leading cause of death for youth in Baltimore, the VIP program uses risk factors to pinpoint patients who fit the intervention criteria. This evaluation illustrates that individuals involved in the program had lower rates of both re-arrest, conviction, and subsequent incarceration. VIP has been a cost-effective intervention with positive outcomes.¹⁷

Offices of Neighborhood Safety

Offices of neighborhood safety are local offices that generally take a holistic approach to neighborhood health and safety. These offices empower community partners and city agencies to play a more active role in the co-production of public safety and prevention of violence through a trauma-responsive, healing-centered, and equity-based approach for the benefit of all community members. Examples include the Mayor’s Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement in Baltimore, Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement in Washington, DC, and the Office of Neighborhood Safety in Richmond, California (ONS).

- Since the establishment of ONS, Richmond has experienced a substantial decrease in violence, with firearm-related homicides declining by more than 70 percent. With respect to those individuals enrolled in the Peacemaker Fellowship program within ONS, 77 percent have not been involved in any gun violence activity.¹⁸

Maryland Has a Pathway to Reduce Gun Violence. Next Steps on a Public Health Approach

Maryland has a long history of using public health strategies to address nearly intractable problems. For example, Maryland embarked on a comprehensive public campaign to lower tobacco use with the establishment of the Cigarette Restitution Fund in 2000. As a result, the number of deaths from tobacco use dropped more than 10 percent from 201.4 per 100,000 to 180.4 between 2002 and 2008.¹⁹

Successful public health campaigns have similar core elements. We already have some of that infrastructure in Maryland. We just need to build out our public health capacity to support our communities to effectuate change.

To support Maryland’s efforts, the Maryland Violence Prevention Coalition (the Coalition) convened our stakeholders to develop recommendations for Governor Moore’s Administration for 2023-2024. The Coalition is pleased to have a partner who is committed to improving the lives of all Marylanders by reducing gun violence.

The Coalition’s recommendations for 2023-2024 are:

¹⁶Cooper, C., Eslinger, D. M., & Stolley, P. D. (2006). Hospital-Based Violence Intervention Programs Work: The Journal of Trauma: Injury, Infection, and Critical Care, 61(3), 534–540.

<https://doi.org/10.1097/01.ta.0000236576.81860.8c>

¹⁷ [Publications – NICJR](#) and [Research on the Effects of Hospital-Based Violence Intervention Programs: Observations and Recommendations - Daniel W. Webster, Joseph Richardson, Nicholas Meyerson, Christopher Vil, Rachel Topazian, 2022](#); A study on risk factors for repeat violent injury among Black men in Baltimore found that a history of incarceration is the most significant risk factor for repeat injury. We cannot underestimate the impact of mass incarceration on gun violence.

¹⁸ [Publications – NICJR](#)

¹⁹ [maryland department of health & mental hygiene cigarette restitution fund program fiscal year 2010 annual report](#)

- **Establish a State Office of Violence Intervention and Prevention:** Gun violence is a complex problem that requires a coordinated approach across people, organizations, and agencies. The Coalition recommends the establishment of the State Office of Violence Intervention and Prevention under the Department of Health. The Office would coordinate efforts with other key State and local agencies, educate the public on gun violence related issues, conduct and/or collaborate on data collection and research, administer grants, leverage and coordinate relevant grant funding administration, and engage stakeholders. Seven states already have similar offices, including: California, New York, Illinois, Colorado, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Washington. Many of these states have invested significant resources into these efforts.
- **Perform a Public Health Needs Assessment:** The Coalition recommends that through the new Office of Violence Intervention and Prevention the Department of Health conduct a systematic assessment of existing resources and need for additional infrastructure to support violence intervention and prevention programs.
- **Increase Resources for Community-Based Programs:** The Coalition recommends the State immediately invest at least another \$3 million in additional resources to support effective community-based violence intervention, victim services, and collaborating hospital-based programming. Maryland has a start with the \$3 million allocated annually to MD VIPP. However, this level of funding is not commensurate with the scale of the problem. Many states have invested considerably more. For example Minnesota, which does not have nearly the scale of the problem Maryland has, recently committed \$70 million over two years. Illinois has committed a \$250 million state investment to implement evidence-based violence prevention strategies.²⁰ While Maryland builds the needed infrastructure to effectively administer these funds, we must start bringing the amount of funding dedicated to this work in line with the critical need that exists.

The Maryland Violence Prevention Coalition is a coalition of organizations with a joint mission of reducing violence and improving living conditions across Maryland. Using a community-led approach, the Coalition seeks to empower the voices often neglected and educate elected officials and the public about urgent community needs. The coalition is co-chaired by Marylanders to Prevent Gun Violence (MPGV) and the Community Justice Action Fund (CJAF) and seeks to elevate the efforts of groups working on the ground in Baltimore and across Maryland to prevent and interrupt violence. The Coalition is composed of more than 50 community members including activists, social service providers, health care practitioners, survivors of gun violence, policy advocates, legislators, concerned citizens, violence prevention practitioners, researchers, and scholars.

²⁰ <https://ovpnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/OVP-Report050923.pdf>

NASW Maryland - 2024 HB 583 FAV - Firearm Violence

Uploaded by: Karessa Proctor

Position: FAV

**House Judiciary Committee
February 14, 2024**

House Bill 583: Center for Firearm Violence Prevention – Establishment

*****SUPPORT*****

The National Association of Social Workers – Maryland Chapter, an organization representing social workers statewide, is asking for your support for House Bill 583 - Center for Firearm Violence Prevention - Establishment.

NASW Maryland supports the creation of the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention to better enable Maryland to address firearm violence through data collection and the dissemination and implementation of evidence-based strategies to identify the root causes of firearm suicides, homicides, and injuries. Among the things that will help this effort is the use of data to identify both risk and protective factors. This use of predictive analytics can help lead the State to more effective policies that will reduce the incidents of death and injury.

Upstream prevention is worth a great deal of investment. We urge a favorable report on House Bill 583.

Respectfully,

Karessa Proctor, BSW, MSW
Executive Director, NASW-MD

Support - HB 583 Center for Firearm Violence Preve

Uploaded by: Ken Shilling

Position: FAV



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

HB 583 Establishment for Center for Firearm Violen

Uploaded by: Kristie Snedeker

Position: FAV



University of Maryland Medical Center
R Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center
Center for Injury Prevention & Policy
22 South Greene Street
Baltimore, MD 21201

February 14, 2024

**Written Testimony in Support (FAV) of
Center for Firearm Violence Prevention - Establishment
HB583**

Dear Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Bartlett, and distinguished member of the committee,

As the state's Primary Adult Resource Center (PARC) and the core element of Maryland's EMS system, the R Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center stands in full support of HB 583 for the establishment of a Center for Firearm Violence Prevention and Intervention within the Maryland Department of Health.

The R Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center, located in the heart of Baltimore, treats nearly 600 victims of firearm injuries each year from across the state. As Maryland's busiest trauma center, we have borne witness to the devastating consequences of firearm violence firsthand. Each day, our dedicated medical professionals confront the immediate aftermath of shootings, working tirelessly to stabilize patients and provide them with the best chance of recovery. However, our work does not end there. We recognize the imperative to address the root causes of violence and to prevent future injuries from occurring.

In 1998, under Dr. Carnell Cooper's leadership, the R Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center started one of the nation's first Hospital Violence Intervention Programs (HVIP). Through a multidisciplinary team approach, Shock Trauma's HVIP program integrates medical care with social services, mental health support, and community resources to address the root causes of violence while attempting to break the cycle of violence and promote healing.

Dr. Cooper and the team conducted one of the first randomized, prospective evaluation of an HVIP. They were able to demonstrate the effectiveness of the HVIP model in significantly reducing re-injury due to gun violence, years of incarceration, cost of care, and unemployment (Cooper, 2006). This white paper gave way to other HVIP programs across the country and increasing public funding to support them.



Gun violence is a complex societal issue rooted in systemic disparities and requires a multifaceted, organized approach for effective treatment. It pervades various aspects of society, impacting individuals, families, communities, and institutions alike. Addressing gun violence entails proactive measures to address underlying social determinants such as poverty and lack of opportunity which requires a coordinated approach. Collaboration among government agencies, law enforcement, healthcare providers, victim services, and community organizations is essential for developing innovative solutions and mobilizing communities to create safer environments. This legislation takes an important step in creating a center responsible for the coordination of these efforts in a manner that is rooted in a public health approach.

By consolidating resources, coordinating efforts, and fostering collaboration among federal, state, and local agencies, the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention and Intervention will serve as a hub for innovation and evidence-based research. It will empower communities with the tools and knowledge needed to implement targeted interventions and disrupt the cycle of violence. Moreover, it will provide a platform for sharing best practices, along with scaling and supporting successful initiatives statewide.

The R Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center understands the fight against gun violence extends far beyond the walls of our hospital. It requires a collective commitment from policymakers, healthcare providers, community organizations, and concerned citizens alike. By investing in prevention, intervention, and community engagement, we can build safer, healthier communities for all Marylanders.

In conclusion, we urge you to support HB 583 and take decisive action to establish a Center for Firearm Violence Prevention and Intervention in Maryland. We look forward to being part of this state-wide effort to turn the tide against gun violence and pave the way for a brighter, more secure future for all Marylanders.

HB583 HAVI Letter of Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Kyle Fischer

Position: FAV



Maryland General Assembly- House Judiciary Committee
Room 101
House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Letter of support for HB 583 Center for Firearm Violence Prevention – Establishment

February 12, 2024

Chair Clippinger and the House Judiciary Committee,

The Health Alliance for Violence Intervention (HAVI) is pleased to support HB 583 “Center for Firearm Violence Prevention – Establishment.” This bill would create an office within the Department of Health to craft a coordinated response to firearm violence across the state. We respectfully ask that your committee provide a favorable report for this important legislation.

The HAVI represents a national network of hospital-based violence intervention programs (HVIPS). HVIPS are victim service providers that use patient-focused strategies to break the cycle of violence and reduce rates of repeat injury. Founded in 2009, the HAVI represents 50 programs across the United States. In fact, the R Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center Violence Intervention Program was one of our founding members, with UM Capital Region Health, Johns Hopkins Hospital, Lifebridge Health, Youth Advocate Programs, and the ROAR Center subsequently joining.

In recent years, the establishment of centers for firearm violence prevention has emerged as a best practice for the development of comprehensive strategies to end gun violence. These offices serve multiple important roles, including: developing an all-of-government plan to address the issue, coordinating work between disparate agencies such as justice, health, education, and housing, coordinating programmatic funding, and acting as trusted subject matter experts for all levels of government.

These offices elevate strategies that address community violence through a public health lens and broaden opportunities to be solution-oriented in addressing community violence, rather than reactive. They engage directly with the communities most impacted by violence, and help promote community-based solutions. By involving community members, policymakers at the local & state level, and community-based organizations, they shape interventions to support local needs. This collaborative approach ensures that solutions are trauma-informed, culturally competent, relevant, and sustainable.

The HAVI has had the privilege of working with similar offices throughout the country and have found them to be effective in both obvious and non-obvious ways. Below is a list of a few tangible examples from the last year:

- The HAVI received a message from the Governor's office of a midwestern state inquiring about a new policy they were considering adopting: covering violence prevention with Medicaid dollars. We were told directly that they learned of the policy option during a meeting with the White House Office of Gun Violence Prevention. This is a prime example of how a newly formed center in Maryland could provide best practices to cities and counties throughout the state who are looking for solutions to ending firearm violence, but could use assistance from a trusted voice.
- In California, the Office of Gun Violence Prevention has taken a central role in coordinating the implementation a bill to reimburse the work of frontline violence prevention professionals. Prior to their involvement, frontline violence intervention organizations faced significant challenges navigating state bureaucracies as the particular policy touched multiple state agencies, including the Department of Health Care Services, Department of Public Health, and Department of Justice. The Office of Gun Violence Prevention was able to assume a coordinating role between the three which led to significant progress in the implementation.
- In North Carolina, the newly established Office of Violence Prevention has already assumed a convening role. Its advisory board includes representatives from antiviolence organizations, physicians, law enforcement, and local government. By bringing a broad swath of perspectives to the table, they are beginning new cooperative strategies that previously would have been unlikely to occur.

We believe HB 583 is an important step to ensure public safety across Maryland. Given the devastating consequences of firearm violence in our state, it is critical that we create structures within the government to address the issue in a thoughtful manner. We believe that this bill does just that.

For these reasons, we ask that the House Judiciary Committee provide a favorable report on HB 583 Center for Firearm Violence Prevention – Establishment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kyle Fischer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kyle Fischer, MD, MPH
Policy Director
The Health Alliance for Violence Intervention (HAVI)
KyleF@TheHAVI.org

GunViolenceCenter.Testimony.House.2.12.24.pdf

Uploaded by: Lydia Watts

Position: FAV

BILL NO: House Bill 583
TITLE: Establishment of the Center for Firearm Prevention
COMMITTEE: Judiciary Committee
HEARING DATE: February 14 at 1 pm
POSITION: **SUPPORT**

I am the Executive Director of The Rebuild, Overcome, and Rise (ROAR) Center at the University of Maryland, Baltimore, representing the interests of the over 750 crime victims from Baltimore City that ROAR has assisted since our inception in June 2019. ROAR is a “one-stop-shop” in Baltimore City where survivors of crime can access a full range of wraparound legal, mental health, case management and nurse care management services in one place, which research has shown provides the best outcomes for survivors who are often managing myriad and complex needs. ROAR aims to co-create with survivors a community in which people who experience crime or systemic injustice are empowered to achieve their own sense of justice, healing, and well-being. ROAR’s mission is to engage with individuals and communities in Baltimore City by providing holistic, client-driven services to survivors of crime and influencing efforts to reform systemic responses to crime. **ROAR urges the House Judiciary Committee to issue a favorable report on HB 583.**

At ROAR we assist victims of all types of crime, abuse, and harm who live or were harmed in Baltimore City, over 70% of whom are survivors of gun violence – family members of homicide victims and survivors of non-fatal gunshots. Hearing from survivors of gun violence, and recognizing how the issues of safety, life trajectory, and risk of being directly impacted by gun violence is deeply rooted in racism and poverty. That reality motivated me to apply for and enroll in the Bloomberg American Health Initiative (BAHI) at the Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health as a student in the Masters of Public Health program. My area of focus is violence – particularly gun violence – as a public health crisis. I started my fellowship in May 2020 and have now studied the vast majority of existing research that demonstrates what is successful in preventing and intervening in gun violence. I have also engaged in first-hand research projects under the tutelage of Dr. Joseph Richardson of the University of Maryland College Park, Departments of African American Studies and Medical Anthropology. As a co-principal investigator with Dr. Richardson, I have interviewed both male and female survivors of non-fatal gunshots from Baltimore City and I have heard first-hand from those research participants and the clients of ROAR that a coordinated, evidence-based approach is critical to reducing the intolerably high rates of gun violence that wrack communities – especially Black and Brown communities – across the State of Maryland. Creating this Center for Gun Violence Prevention within the state Department of Health is a critical piece of this effort.

For the above stated reasons, **ROAR urges a favorable report on HB 583.**

HB 583_MNADV_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Melanie Shapiro

Position: FAV



BILL NO: House Bill 583
TITLE: Center for Firearm Violence Prevention - Establishment
COMMITTEE: Judiciary
HEARING DATE: February 14, 2024
POSITION: **SUPPORT**

The Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence (MNADV) is the state domestic violence coalition that brings together victim service providers, allied professionals, and concerned individuals for the common purpose of reducing intimate partner and family violence and its harmful effects on our citizens. **MNADV urges the House Judiciary Committee to issue a favorable report on HB 583.**

Of the 37 domestic violence related deaths in Maryland in 2023, 73% were caused by guns. Higher rates of firearm ownership correlate to a higher rate of domestic violence homicide according to a 2019 study.¹ There is a 65% higher incidence rate of domestic firearm homicide in the states with the highest firearm ownership compared to states with lower ownership rates.² Since women are the most common victims of domestic violence homicide, they are most at risk with increased gun ownership.³ The risk of homicide for women increases by 500% with the presence of a gun in the home.⁴

House Bill 583 would establish the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention in the Maryland Department of Health to reduce firearm violence, harm from firearm violence, and misuse of firearms in the State. MNADV supports a public health approach to the reduction of all firearm violence including the firearm violence present in domestic violence. MNADV provides technical assistance to the Domestic Violence Fatality Review Teams across the State and oversees the Domestic Violence Fatality Review State Implementation Team. We believe HB 583 and the creation of the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention could benefit victims of domestic violence.

For the above stated reasons, the **Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence urges a favorable report on HB 583.**

¹ Kivisto, A.J., Magee, L.A., Phalen, P.L., Ray, B.R. (2019). Firearm ownership and domestic versus nondomestic homicide in the U.S. American Journal of Preventive Medicine, Abstract: [https://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797\(19\)30197-7/fulltext#articleInformation](https://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797(19)30197-7/fulltext#articleInformation)

² Merovsh, Sarah. "Gun Ownership Rates Tied to Domestic Homicides, but Not Other Killings, Study Finds," NY Times, (July 22, 2019) <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/22/us/gun-ownership-violence-statistics.html>

³ *Id.*

⁴ The National Domestic Violence Hotline, Retrieved 1/29/21, <https://www.thehotline.org/resources/safety-planning-around-guns-and-firearms/>

For further information contact Melanie Shapiro ■ Public Policy Director ■ 301-852-3930 ■ mshapiro@mnadv.org

Center for Violence VPI - Favorable.docx (1).pdf

Uploaded by: Myles Hicks

Position: FAV

*STATE OF MARYLAND
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR*



*WES MOORE,
GOVERNOR*

*STATE HOUSE
100 STATE CIRCLE
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401-1925
(410) 974-3901
(TOLL FREE) 1-800-811-8336*

TTY USERS CALL VIA MD RELAY

Dear Chairman Clippinger, Vice-chair Barlett, and members of the committee,

On behalf of Governor Wes Moore, I urge a favorable report on HB583/SB475 - Center for Firearm Violence Prevention - Establishment. The Center for Firearm Violence Prevention and Intervention will be created within the Department of Health to consolidate and better coordinate our State's public health approach to preventing gun violence. This legislation also requires the Center to create a state plan that will be updated every four years with the goal of reducing firearm violence in Maryland.

The Center within the Department of Health will serve as a partner to federal and local governments, advocates, institutions, and medical professionals engaged in the work of hospital- and community-based violence intervention programs. There is significant evidence that violence, particularly in areas where there is a high incidence of it, can be contagious in the sense that a violent act may inspire other violent acts in retaliation. The goal of public health approaches to violence reduction is to interrupt these cycles of violence, and to inoculate the public against violence by engaging in direct, community-focused efforts that engage with individuals in their own communities and in health care settings.

Governor Moore is proud to sponsor legislation that follows President Biden's recommendation that states create their own offices of gun violence prevention. Gun violence intervention programs were pioneered in Maryland, but there is more work to do to ensure that they are adequately funded and informed by the best available data. The Moore-Miller Administration's top priority is keeping our communities safe. 75% of homicides in Maryland are committed with a firearm. This is a public safety and public health crisis that we must address.

Sincerely,
Myles Hicks
Deputy Legislative Officer
Office of the Governor

HB0583-JUD-FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Nina Themelis

Position: FAV



BRANDON M. SCOTT
MAYOR

Office of Government Relations
88 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

HB0583

February 14, 2024

TO: Members of the House Judiciary Committee

FROM: Nina Themelis, Director of Mayor's Office of Government Relations

RE: House Bill 583 – Center for Firearm Violence Prevention - Establishment

POSITION: FAVORABLE

Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Bartlett, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** House Bill (HB) 583.

HB 583 establishes the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention within the Maryland Department of Health, which will partner with federal, State, and local agencies and affected communities to implement a whole-of-government, public health approach to firearm violence reduction.

Firearm injuries are the leading causes of death for youth ages 1-19 nationally, with disproportionately high impacts on communities of color.^{i,iii} Gun violence deaths are increasing nationwide, and even more so in Maryland. The state's rate of gun violence deaths has increased dramatically over the last decade, increasing by 54% from 2012 to 2021, compared to a 39% increase nationally.ⁱⁱⁱ The incidence of gun violence involving youth has significantly increased over the past year.^{ii,iv} According to Baltimore Police data, in 2023 there were 276 non-fatal shootings and 80 homicides involving youth under 24 years of age.

Addressing this crisis requires a multi-level and multi-faceted approach that includes going upstream to address the root causes of violence. The public health approach to violence prevention is grounded in science and recognized as a best practice. It emphasizes a multi-sector approach to understanding the problem, identifying root causes, and developing strategies for prevention.^v Streamlining and coordinating these efforts from the state level will help strengthen local efforts for systems-level change.

For these reasons, the BCA respectfully requests a **favorable** report on HB 583.

ⁱ US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2023). Fast Facts: Firearm Violence and Injury Prevention. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/firearms/fastfact.html>

ⁱⁱ Bailey K. Roberts, Colleen P. Nofi, Emma Cornell, Sandeep Kapoor, Laura Harrison, Chethan Sathya; Trends and Disparities in Firearm Deaths Among Children. Pediatrics September 2023; 152 (3): e2023061296. 10.1542/peds.2023-061296

ⁱⁱⁱ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. National Vital Statistics System, Mortality 2018-2021 on CDC WONDER Online Database, released in 2021. Data are from the Multiple Cause of Death Files, 2018-2021, as compiled from data provided by the 57 vital statistics jurisdictions through the Vital Statistics Cooperative Program. Retrieved from <http://wonder.cdc.gov/ucd-icd10-expanded.html>

^{iv} Goldstick, J., Cunningham, R., & Carter, P. (2022). Current Causes of Death in Children and Adolescents in the United States. N Engl J Med 2022; 386:1955-1956. DOI: 10.1056/NEJMc2201761

^v Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022). The Public Health Approach to Violence Prevention. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/about/publichealthapproach.html>

HB 583- LWVMD- FAV- Center for Firearm Violence Pr

Uploaded by: Nora Miller Smith

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

HB0583: Center for Firearm Violence Prevention- Establishment

POSITION: Support

BY: Linda Kohn, President

DATE: February 14, 2024

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan organization that works to influence public policy through education and advocacy. The League supports the development of community programs which emphasize the primary prevention of violence, and believes that the proliferation of handguns and semi-automatic weapons in the United States is a major health and safety threat to its residents.

The League of Women Voters Maryland thus supports **House Bill 583: Center for Firearm Violence Prevention- Establishment.**

Establishing the Center within the Department of Health will enable it to focus on **treating gun violence not only as a public safety issue, but as the major public health crisis it is.**

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,¹ there were more than 48,000 firearm-related deaths in the US in 2022, and **“firearm injuries were the leading cause of death among children and teens age 1-19.”** The CDC notes that **“The effects of firearm violence extend beyond victims and their families. Shooting incidents, including those in homes, schools, houses of worship, workplaces, shopping areas, on the street or at community events can affect the sense of safety and security of entire communities...”**

Reducing firearm violence is of crucial importance to our families, our schools, our communities, and our state. The League of Women Voters Maryland, representing 1,500+ concerned citizens throughout Maryland, urges a favorable report on House Bill 583.

¹<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/firearms/fastfact.html#:~:text=A%20firearm%20injury%20is%20a,charge%20to%20fire%20a%20projectile>

HB 583 - MSAA Favorable.pdf

Uploaded by: Patrick Gilbert

Position: FAV



Maryland State's Attorneys' Association

3300 North Ridge Road, Suite 185

Ellicott City, Maryland 21043

410-203-9881

FAX 410-203-9891

Rich Gibson
President

Steven I. Kroll
Coordinator

DATE: February 14, 2024

BILL NUMBER: HB 583

POSITION: Support

The Maryland State's Attorney's Association (MSAA) supports House Bill 583.

Gun violence has reached epidemic proportions in our state, and is now the leading cause of death among children and teens in Maryland. MSAA sees the human cost of this violence every day as it seeks justice for victims and their families in our criminal legal system. The interests served by prosecution of firearms offenders, though – interests like accountability, rehabilitation, and deterrence – are just one piece of this puzzle. HB 583 prioritizes another piece, one that must be at the forefront of our efforts: prevention.

HB 583 creates the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention, and ensures a holistic, public health approach to violence prevention and intervention. MSAA applauds Governor Moore and the sponsors of this important piece of legislation for providing for an evidence-based, “whole-of-government” approach to such an urgent challenge, and looks forward to collaborating with stakeholders and community leaders at all levels across the state to make our communities safer.

2024 ACNM HB 583 House Side.pdf

Uploaded by: Robyn Elliott

Position: FAV



Committee: House Judiciary Committee

Bill Number: HB 583

Title: Center for Firearm Violence Prevention - Establishment

Hearing Date: February 14, 2024

Position: Support

The Maryland Affiliate of the American College of Nurse Midwives (ACNM) supports *House Bill 583 - Center for Firearm Violence Prevention - Establishment*. The bill will establish the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention in the Maryland Department of Health.

Certified nurse-midwives provide care for women who may be exposed to gun violence that puts them at risk for personal harm, destruction of the family structure, and loss of financial stability. Women in the U.S. who are pregnant or who have recently given birth are more likely to be murdered than to die from obstetric causes—and these homicides are linked to a deadly mix of intimate partner violence and firearms.ⁱ In recognition that firearm-related violence is a complex, multifaceted issue that significantly affects women’s health, ACNM supports efforts to continue research, promote policy change, and develop effective prevention strategies at individual, community, and national levels.

We ask for a favorable report on this legislation. If we can provide any further information, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net or (443) 926-3443.

ⁱ Homicide leading cause of death for pregnant women in U.S., October 21, 2022, <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/hsph-in-the-news/homicide-leading-cause-of-death-for-pregnant-women-in-u-s/>. Accessed February 10, 2024.

2024 MCHS HB 583 House Side.pdf

Uploaded by: Robyn Elliott

Position: FAV



Maryland Community Health System

Committee:	House Judiciary Committee
Bill Number:	HB 583
Title:	Center for Firearm Violence Prevention - Establishment
Hearing Date:	February 14, 2024
Position:	Support

The Maryland Community Health System (MCHS) supports *House Bill 583 - Center for Firearm Violence Prevention - Establishment*. The bill establishes the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention in the Maryland Department of Health to reduce firearm violence, harm from firearm violence, and misuse of firearms in the State by partnering with federal, State, and local agencies, and affected communities to implement a public health approach to firearm violence reduction.

MCHS is a network of seven federally qualified health centers with 55 care delivery sites across the state of Maryland. Our mission is to ensure underserved communities have access to somatic, behavioral, and oral health care. Social determinants of health and the cycle of gun violence are inextricably linked, with many of the communities we serve experiencing high rates of firearm-related injury and death and also being disproportionately impacted by other health issues. MCHS strongly supports working specifically with affected communities because, as with so many areas of public health, community input should inform the efforts and initiatives developed around gun violence prevention.

MCHS requests a favorable report on this bill. If we can provide any further information, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net.

2024 WLCM HB 583 House Side.pdf

Uploaded by: Robyn Elliott

Position: FAV

Committee: House Judiciary Committee

Bill Number: HB 583

Title: Center for Firearm Violence Prevention - Establishment

Hearing Date: February 14, 2024

Position: Support

The Women's Law Center of Maryland (WLC) supports *House Bill 583 - Center for Firearm Violence Prevention - Establishment*. The bill would establish the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention and Intervention under the Department of Health. The WLC supports Governor Moore's public health approach for addressing the issue of gun violence in our communities.

As part of our mission, WLC provides legal services to survivors of intimate partner violence. Victims and survivors of intimate partner violence are at a heightened risk for death or injury due to gun violence. Firearms are involved in more than half of intimate partner homicides, and individuals facing intimate partner violence are five times more likely to be killed when their partner has access to a gun.ⁱ We support the integrated approach in HB 583 of working with families, communities, and local officials in designing prevention and intervention strategies that are evidence-based.

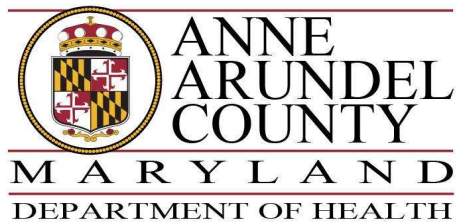
We ask for a favorable report. If we can provide any further information, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net or (443) 926-3443.

ⁱ Tobin-Tyler E. Intimate Partner Violence, Firearm Injuries and Homicides: A Health Justice Approach to Two Intersecting Public Health Crises. *J Law Med Ethics*. 2023;51(1):64-76. doi: 10.1017/jme.2023.41. Epub 2023 May 25. PMID: 37226755; PMCID: PMC10209983.

Final HB0583 Testimony for 2-14-24 Hearing.pdf

Uploaded by: Tonii Gedin

Position: FAV



HOUSE BILL 583

Center for Firearm Violence Prevention - Establishment

WRITTEN TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

Tonii Gedin, RN, DNP, Health Officer, Anne Arundel Department of Health

For Anne Arundel Department of Health and the Maryland Association of County Health Officers

The Anne Arundel County Department of Health and the Maryland Association of County Health Officers (MACHO), the professional association of the chief executives of the state's 24 local public health departments (LHDs), **supports HB 583**. The bill establishes the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention within the Maryland Department of Health with the purpose of reducing firearm violence, harm from firearm violence, and misuse of firearms in the State by partnering with federal, state, and local agencies and affected communities to implement a public health approach to firearm violence reduction.

Firearm violence is a leading cause of premature death in the United States, killing more than 38,000 people and causing approximately 85,000 injuries each year¹. Nearly 2,500 Maryland lives were lost due to firearms from 2019-2021, with over half of these deaths to residents under the age of 35 years.² In addition to the preventable loss of life, family and community trauma, firearm violence is estimated to cost the state of Maryland \$10.5 billion³ per year.

While Maryland is a national leader with strong firearm safety laws, our firearm violence rate is higher compared to other states with similar laws.⁴ A public health approach is needed to address escalating firearm violence, which relies on recognizing violence is contagious like a disease, and can become an epidemic within a society.⁵ There are proven methods to address firearm violence, and a statewide public health approach, using evidence-based methods, is needed to address the growing problem of firearm violence in Maryland.

Anne Arundel County has prioritized addressing firearm violence through a countywide public health approach by bringing together partners from various sectors in our Gun Violence Intervention Team (GVIT). While we are actively working to reduce firearm violence in our county consistent support is needed across the state to reduce firearm violence. The Center for Firearm Violence Prevention will promote best practices as well as seek needed federal funding to support statewide prevention efforts that will benefit all Maryland jurisdictions.

For these reasons, the Anne Arundel County Department of Health and the Maryland Association of County Health Officers **supports HB 583**. For more information, please contact Ruth Maiorana, MACHO Executive Director at rmaiora1@jhu.edu or 410-937-1433. This communication reflects the position of MACHO.

¹ <https://www.apha.org/topics-and-issues/gun-violence>

² CDC Wonder, Underlying Cause of Death, <https://wonder.cdc.gov/ucd-icd10.html>

³ <https://governor.maryland.gov/news/press/pages/governor-moore-proclaims-national-gun-violence-awareness-day-in-maryland.aspx#:~:text=In%20Maryland%2C%20gun%20violence%20causes,which%20is%20paid%20by%20taxpayers.>

⁴ <https://everytownresearch.org/rankings/>

⁵ <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamainternalmedicine/article-abstract/2594800>

PROGRESS Testimony in SUPPORT of HB0583.pdf

Uploaded by: Woodie Kessel

Position: FAV



progress@umd.edu
go.umd.edu/progress
#PROGRESSumd

PROGRESS Co-Directors:
Joseph B. Richardson, Jr., PhD
Woodie Kessel, MD, MPH

**TESTIMONY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND PROGRESS INITIATIVE
ON FEBRUARY 14, 2024
BEFORE THE MARYLAND HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE
REGARDING HOUSE BILL 0583 - CROSS-FILED WITH: SB0475
CENTER FOR FIREARM VIOLENCE PREVENTION – ESTABLISHMENT**

SUPPORT

Honorable Chair Luke Clippinger and Vice Chair J. Sandy Bartlett and distinguished members of Judiciary Committee:

The University of Maryland's PROGRESS Initiative provides this testimony in support of House Bill 583 - Center For Firearm Violence Prevention – Establishment, sponsored by Speaker of the House, Adrienne A Jones by request of the Moore Administration and the many Co-sponsor Delegates. Responding to the need address the epidemic of gun violence, this legislation establishes the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention in the Maryland Department of Health to reduce firearm violence, harm from firearm violence, and misuse of firearms. HB583 calls for a public health approach to firearm violence reduction that would emphasize science-informed actions; utilizing data and research to formulate effective strategies and solutions; and coordination between federal, state, and local agencies and authorities including academia, law enforcement, communities and advocates.

Gun violence in America continues to be a tragic and uniquely American epidemic affecting all communities all across our country. Schools, churches, mosques, synagogues, grocery stores, hospitals, malls, entertainment venues, nightclubs, neighborhoods, streets, malls, and homes are not safe places. According to the CDC, there were 48,830 firearm deaths in the US in 2021, amounting to more than 133 fatalities on average every day from homicide, suicide, unintentional injury, and legal intervention.¹ Firearm related morbidity is estimated at 3-5 times the number of deaths with untold human and capital costs.

In Maryland in 2021 there were 915 deaths from firearms with 592 homicides and 310 deaths by suicide.² Gun violence is now the leading cause of death for children and youth surpassing motor vehicle deaths and those caused by other injuries in our State. Baltimore and Prince George's County account for 75% of all fatal and nonfatal shootings in the State.

¹ CDC Wisqars On-line Causes of Injury-Related Death Data Base, Violence-related Firearm Deaths; Both Sexes; All Ages; All Races and Ethnicity; US and Maryland; 2021.

<https://wisqars.cdc.gov/explore/?o=MORT&y1=2021&y2=2021&g=00&g=24&t=0&i=0&m=20890&d=&s=0&r=0&m=0&ry=2&yp=65&e=0&a=ALL&a1=0&a2=199&g1=0&g2=199>

² Ibid





progress@umd.edu
go.umd.edu/progress
#PROGRESSumd

PROGRESS Co-Directors:
Joseph B. Richardson, Jr., PhD
Woodie Kessel, MD, MPH

Root factors such as poverty, racism, misinformation, and law enforcement tensions have been inextricably linked to the rising numbers of homicide, suicide, and mass shooting firearm deaths. For decades, gun violence has been the leading cause of death and disability among Black males ages 16-44. It has become the leading cause of death for children and youth in the US, surpassing motor vehicle crash deaths. Gun violence costs Maryland approximately \$10.5 billion annually with Maryland taxpayers bearing an estimated \$384 million.

Preventing the tragic consequences of gun violence in our communities and our nation is among the highest priorities and grand challenges of our time. University of Maryland President Darryll J. Pines has directed action now to “do something” to summon all of our strengths and assets to act for the public’s good and prevent gun violence and save lives. He said, “Effective solutions to grand challenges demands fearless ideas...” and established The University of Maryland Prevent Gun Violence: Research, Empowerment, Strategies and Solutions (PROGRESS) Initiative in November 2023.

The provisions of HB0583 to establish the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention are consonant with and complimentary to PROGRESS. PROGRESS addresses two key pillars of the University of Maryland's strategic plan: to accelerate solutions to humanity’s grand challenges and to advance the public good. Sponsored by the Office of the President and housed within the College of Behavior and Social Science, the mission of PROGRESS is to reduce firearm-related violence using a multi-disciplinary, community-based and translational science public health approach to promote actionable gun violence interventions to promote public safety and enhance the quality of life for the people of Maryland, the National Capital Region, and the nation. UMD President Darryll Pines tasked Joseph Richardson, PhD and Woodie Kessel, MD, MPH with developing, implementing and leading PROGRESS.

HB0583 is also consistent with the recently established White House Office of Gun Violence Prevention responsibilities including enhancing the federal government’s partnerships with cities and states to help them advance their own efforts to reduce gun violence.³

In summary, HB0583 offers a comprehensive approach that will enhance the safety of Marylanders aligning with evidence-based practices and addressing critical issues related to the prevention of gun violence employing an important public health approach. PROGRESS urges the committee to produce a favorable report supporting House Bill 0583 (and the cross-filed Senate version SB0475) to build on Maryland’s efforts to prevent the trauma and nightmare of gun violence in our State. Nothing could be more important.

³ FACT SHEET: Vice President Harris Launches the Biden-Harris Administration Safer States Initiative, Highlights New Executive Actions to Reduce Gun Violence. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/12/13/fact-sheet-vice-president-harris-launches-the-biden-harris-administration-safer-states-initiative-highlights-new-executive-actions-to-reduce-gun-violence/>



1123E Taliaferro Hall, 4280 Chapel Drive, College Park, MD 20742
PROGRESS is a University of Maryland Fearlessly Forward Initiative sponsored by the Office of the President and housed within the College of Behavior and Social Sciences (BSOS).

House Bill 583 Center to Prevent Gun Violence.pdf

Uploaded by: Cathy Wright

Position: UNF



**House Bill 583
Center for Firearm Violence Prevention**

UNFAVORABLE

While we applaud efforts to reduce violent crime, the Maryland State Rifle & Pistol Association (MSRPA) opposes HB 583 and the spending of taxpayer dollars especially when the State is facing a \$1.1 billion deficit. A fiscal note has yet to be published and Maryland citizens should not have to bear the burden of unknown expense and debt.

The bill is vaguely worded and insufficiently detailed for definitive interpretation. In addition, it creates a bureaucratic office with no legislative oversight or checks on its actions or authority.

The members of the MSRPA are willing and able to contribute to the state's efforts to identify meaningful ways to prevent violent crime and protect Maryland citizens. Why not invite the pro-Second Amendment community to participate?

As currently written, the MSRPA respectfully requests an Unfavorable report on HB 583 Center for Firearm Violence Prevention.

Cathy Wright, MSRPA VP Legislative Affairs

cwright@msrpa.org

<https://msrpa.org>

The MSRPA is the official National Rifle Association state organization for Maryland. The MSRPA's mission is to defend our rights in Maryland, support training in firearm safety and shooting skills through its affiliated clubs, and sponsor and sanction local competition throughout the state.

HB0583_Testimony_2A_Maryland.pdf

Uploaded by: John Josselyn

Position: UNF



**House Bill 0583
Center for Firearm Violence Prevention - Establishment
UNFAVORABLE**

House Bill 583 seeks to establish what will be yet another in a lengthy list of “studies” to study the problem of violent crime involving the use of a firearm. Like all its predecessors, it will focus on the inanimate object rather than the perpetrator.

It is another classic example of symbolism over substance, a new program created with great fanfare, all the typical “sound bite” language, spanning multiple years, and failing to reach any viable solutions.

It is noteworthy that as of this writing, there is no fiscal note available, and the bill does not identify any funding source beyond an unspecified appropriation which *may* (or may not) be included in the annual budget. Instead, this Bill appears to rely on nebulous unnamed federal grants which may or may not be available now or in the future.

Maryland does not need more politically driven studies. The problem is clear as are the factors contributing to the problem. The solution is difficult and will take time to accomplish.

Begin by restoring the classic nuclear family; a father and a mother, both living in the same household. Teach traditional family values such as respect, honesty, love, loyalty, integrity, character, the value of hard work, and religion.

Demand that school systems provide proper education rather than simply passing students through the system who “graduate” but are functionally illiterate with no job skills and little hope of ever finding gainful employment. Hold the schools financially accountable.

Hold authorities responsible for providing safe housing. Encourage job growth by not treating businesses as the enemy and encourage job creation by ending the persecution of businesses through ever increasing tax burdens.

Until legislators have the courage to address the real problems, HB 583 is just another study.

John H. Josselyn

2A Maryland

02/14/2024