

Senator William C. Smith, Jr.
Senator Jeff Waldstreicher
Judicial Committee
2 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Bill: SB 0577 – Public Safety - Distribution of Literature to Purchasers of Firearms and Ammunition

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

I am writing on behalf of the Maryland School Psychologists' Association (MSPA), a professional organization representing about 500 Maryland school psychologists. We advocate for the social-emotional, behavioral, and academic wellbeing of students and families across the state. School psychologists play a vital role in school communities.

According to a report released by the Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg Center (JOHN HOPKINS CENTER FOR GUN VIOLENCE SOLUTIONS, 2024), 2022 was the third year in a row that firearms were the leading cause of death for children and teens. Someone is killed by a gun every 11 minutes. *Seven children* under the age of 18 die from gunshots *every single day*. This is not only a public health crisis; it is a public education crisis. Students exposed to gun violence in the community “suffer serious negative mental health consequences, attend school less regularly, and perform worse on standardized tests”, (The White House, 2025).

Pamphlets are effective. Research shows pamphlets like these cause more than half of gun owners to say they want to store their guns safely (Hoops, Hernandez, Ziegfeld, Nasr, & Crifasi, 2021). Short of providing free and low-cost access to safe firearm storage, and enacting more stringent Child Access Prevention (CAP) laws, circulating information that leads to better safety awareness seems the least we can do to save lives.

This requirement is not unusual. Written documentation of safety hazards on hazardous materials is common. Cancer and poisoning *combined* kill fewer children than guns, yet warning labels are already required on tobacco and alcohol products, and toxic household substances.

For the above reasons, MSPA respectfully urges a favorable report on SB 0577. If we can provide any further information or be of any assistance, please contact us at legislative@mSPAonline.org or Sarah Peters at speters@hbstrategies.us or 410-322-2320.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Sarah Peters PhD".

Laura M. Grubb, PhD, BCBA-D, LBA

On behalf of the MSPA Legislative Committee

References:

Hoops KEM, Hernandez E, Ziegfeld S, Nasr I, Crifasi C. Evaluating the Use of a Pamphlet as an Educational Tool to Improve Safe Firearm Storage in the Home. *Clinical Pediatrics*. 2021;60(1):67-70. doi:[10.1177/0009922820961772](https://doi.org/10.1177/0009922820961772)

Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions. (2024). *Gun violence in the United States: The impact on public health and policy*. Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. <https://publichealth.jhu.edu/sites/default/files/2024-09/2022-cgvs-gun-violence-in-the-united-states.pdf>

The White House. (2025, January 15). *The cumulative costs of gun violence on students and schools*. The White House. <https://bidenwhitehouse.archives.gov/cea/written-materials/2025/01/15/the-cumulative-costs-of-gun-violence-on-students-and-schools/#:~:text=Gun%20Violence%20Out%20of%20School&text=Youth%20exposed%20to%20these%20senseless,perform%20worse%20on%20standardized%20tests.>