



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 0577

**Public Safety - Distribution of Literature to Purchasers
of Firearms and Ammunition
Judicial Proceedings
FAVORABLE**

TO: Sen. William C. Smith, Chair; Sen. Jeff Waldstreicher, Vice-Chair; and the
Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Rev. Kenneth Phelps, Jr., The Episcopal Diocese of Maryland

DATE: February 7, 2025

In 2022, the 80th General Convention of the Episcopal Church commended investment in evidence-based community violence intervention programs and strategies that address gun violence as a public health issue; called for the strengthening of anti-violence social norms; and ending the proliferation of guns in our society. Further, the Church called upon its dioceses, congregations and individual Episcopalians to advocate for funding and public policy to support community violence intervention programs and strategies that have been proven to reduce gun violence. In that spirit, I thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony on behalf of the Diocese of Maryland.

This bill is a small step in the direction of freeing our nation from the plague of gun violence. But it is an important step and we will need to take many more before all of our communities are free from this constant and seemingly unstoppable threat. As Christians we are compelled by the non-violent teachings of Jesus, who taught that love was the way to combat fear and rivalry and warned that if we chose to live by violence (the sword, or in this case, the gun) that we would die by the same. This cycle has to end and education is one tool – and a powerful tool - that we can use to help turn our neighbors from this violent obsession.

The Diocese of Maryland requests a Favorable report