



Young Democrats of Maryland

HB713 - Public Safety - Distribution of Literature to Purchasers of Firearms and Ammunition Judiciary Committee - 2/19/25 SUPPORT

Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Bartlett, and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this priority bill for the Young Democrats of Maryland. YDM represents the next generation of Marylanders and seeks to advance policies that will allow Maryland youth to thrive.

HB713 will require the Maryland Department of Health to prepare firearm-related literature and for it to be distributed to all county health departments and establishments that sell firearms or ammunition. This literature, which will provide information on firearm safety and training, suicide prevention, mental health awareness, and conflict resolution, must be distributed to purchasers of firearms and ammunition.

In 2022, which was the last time the CDC finalized data for such a study, Maryland had the 9th highest gun homicide rate in the country. 539 deaths were results of homicide, and 269 deaths were results of suicide. Additionally, the issue is particularly salient for Maryland youth; firearms were the leading cause of death among children/teens ages 1-17¹ and non-fatal shooting victimization of young people quadrupled in 2023.²

Research has shown that firearm safety training can significantly reduce gun violence in high-risk communities, and individuals at the greatest risk of experiencing gun violence tend to receive no formal firearm safety training.³ This literature is a small but impactful way to ensure that those purchasing firearms know how to handle them safely.

In addition to the strong influence this initiative could have on the prevalence of gun violence in our communities, it is a small financial burden compared to many legislative proposals that come

¹ <https://publichealth.jhu.edu/center-for-gun-violence-solutions/maryland>

² https://djs.maryland.gov/Documents/MD-DJS-Juvenile-Crime-Data-Brief_20230912.pdf

³ <https://ccjs.umd.edu/feature/umd-study-high-risk-communities-would-benefit-firearm-safety-training#:~:text=Firearm%20safety%20training%20could%20significantly,the%20journal%20Preventive%20Medicine%20suggests.>

before this committee. With a fiscal estimation of only \$25,000, this legislation will save lives at minimal cost.

For these reasons, we respectfully ask for your support of HB713 and strongly urge a favorable report.

Sincerely,

Mark Brewster II
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Chair, YDM Legislative and Policy Committee

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