

SB0775_RichardKaplowitz_FAV
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TESTIMONY ON BILL SB#0775 - POSITION: FAVORABLE
Public Safety - Gun Buyback Programs - Destruction of Firearms

TO: Chair Smith, Jr., Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee
FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of bill SB0775, Public Safety - Gun Buyback Programs - Destruction of Firearms

Gun buyback programs compensate individuals who turn over firearms to a public agency or private organization. In the United States, nearly all buyback programs are implemented at the county or city level, and participation is always voluntary. The primary goal of gun buyback programs is to prevent firearm violence by reducing the stock of firearms in a community. Gun buybacks can also serve as venues for raising awareness of the risks associated with firearms, educating participants about safer firearm storage, and connecting violence prevention organizations, all of which could potentially lead to reductions in firearm crimes, injuries, or deaths.¹

The Maryland Department of Health has reported that Maryland has seen a sharp and consistent decline in both firearm homicides and injuries since 2021. There's still work to be done, and the MDH Firearm Violence Data Dashboard is key to understanding how gun violence impacts our communities. See a snapshot of gun violence over the last year, compared to years past, to see how trends are changing: bit.ly/FirearmViolenceDataDashboard.²

This bill can add another tool to keep this trend moving in the right direction.

This bill will require a federal firearms licensee or law enforcement agency operating a gun buyback program to destroy each firearm and all its component parts that is traded in as part of a gun buyback program; authorizing a licensee or agency to contract with a law enforcement agency or a business to destroy certain firearms; requiring a law enforcement agency operating a program to determine if a firearm is a crime firearm or has been reported lost or stolen before destroying the weapon; etc.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on bill SB0775, Public Safety - Gun Buyback Programs - Destruction of Firearms.

¹ <https://www.rand.org/research/gun-policy/analysis/essays/gun-buyback-programs.html>

² <https://www.facebook.com/MDHealthDept/posts/good-news-maryland-has-seen-a-sharp-and-consistent-decline-in-both-firearm-homic/1369784758519901/>