

February 25, 2020.

House Bill 822

Maryland Violence Intervention and Prevention Program

Fund and Advisory Council - Alterations

House Appropriations Committee

Position: FAVORABLE

Anne Arundel County **SUPPORTS** House Bill 822 - Maryland Violence Intervention and Prevention Program Fund and Advisory Council - Alterations. This Bill supports effective violence reduction strategies by providing competitive grants to local governments and nonprofit organizations to fund evidence-based health programs or evidence-informed health programs. The fund will also evaluate the efficacy of evidence-based health programs or evidence informed health programs funded through the program.

Gun Violence is a leading cause for premature death in the United States and is the second most frequent cause of death among children and adolescents in the United States. In Anne Arundel County, a gun was used to commit violence against a person almost every day in the past five years with a total of 1,168 incidents with a breakdown of 57 murders, 106 suicides, and 936 robberies.

In 2019, the Anne Arundel County Executive established the Gun Violence Prevention Task Force to research and compile data on crimes involving guns and recommend actions to help reduce gun violence in the County. The Task Force issued a preliminary report in December of 2019 with a mandate to address gun violence as a public health issue. The report also set forth a range of recommendations broadly grouped into four categories: Intervening before gun violence; community outreach, communications and training; data collection; and supporting gun safety measures.

The Health Department is setting up a Gun Violence Intervention Team, modeled on the Opioid Intervention Team, to lead a cross-agency group to assess these recommendations for cost, feasibility and impact prior to implementing them. This bill would provide critical funding for counties to assess and implement violence prevention strategies. For Anne Arundel County, we are setting in place the infrastructure to comprehensively address violence prevention and having a dedicated source of funding will enhance our ability to meaningfully implement solutions and collect the data to demonstrate the effectiveness of this approach.

Accordingly, Anne Arundel County respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE** report on House Bill 822.