



Support SB 208 - Background Checks on Long Guns Elizabeth Banach, Executive Director Marylanders to Prevent Gun Violence

Universal Background checks are a vital tool in preventing gun homicides, injuries and suicides. Marylanders to Prevent Gun Violence supports HB 4, which would require background checks for all long gun transactions and would close a dangerous loophole in Maryland by requiring background checks for rifles and shotguns and not only regulated firearms.

Cassandra Crifasi and Paul Nestadt's soon to be released study on long gun provides compelling statistics on the impact of long guns and suicides, particularly among young people living in rural parts of Maryland. According to their research, 28% (roughly four thousand people) used a long gun to commit suicide in Maryland between 2003 and 2018. People in rural counties were more likely (52% of the cases) to use a long gun to take their lives. Children who live in rural areas used long guns in 80% of successful suicide attempts.

Crifasi's and Nestadt's study demonstrates that long guns play a tragic role in our state's firearm suicide problem, especially in rural areas and among youth. Rifles and shotguns are just as lethal as handguns and we must ensure they are not falling into the hands of prohibited purchasers.

Furthermore, we know that background checks help prevent diversions of guns into the black market. States without universal background checks export crime guns to other states at a 30% higher rate.¹ Maryland needs to rectify this oversight in our existing law by closing this dangerous loop hole.

This is not a politically contentious issue. According to a Quinnipiac Poll 97% of Americans believe in instituting Universal Background Checks on a Federal Level. We have nearly universal support of this issue precisely because it is common sense: No one who is prohibited from owning a gun should be able to legally purchase a gun, regardless of the type of gun.

Marylanders to Prevent Gun Violence supports HB 4 and we ask the committee for a favorable report.

¹ Daniel W. Webster, Jon S. Vernick, and Maria T. Bulzacchelli, "Effects of State-level Firearm Seller Accountability Policies on Firearm Trafficking," *Journal of Urban Health* 86, no. 4 (2009): 525-537; Daniel W. Webster, Jon S. Vernick, Emma E. McGinty, and Ted Alcorn, "Preventing the Diversion of Guns to Criminals Through Effective Firearm Sales Laws," in *Reducing Gun Violence in America: Informing Policy with Evidence and Analysis* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), 109-121. ↵