



4FRONT

STUDENTS TAKING ACTION FOR CHANGE

## WRITTEN TESTIMONY

Senate Bill 646

Public Safety – Access to Firearms – Storage Requirements

Judicial Proceedings - February 20, 2020

### SUPPORT

Our names are Ari Geller, David Klein, Nathan Leder, Gabi Moshkatal, and Ilan Weiner and we are participants in a program called STAC. Students Taking Action for Change, or STAC, is a political advocacy program that allows Jewish teenagers in the greater Baltimore area to explore politics, learn about our political system, and gain experience using our voice to great positive change in our communities.

**We are writing you to ask for your support for Senate Bill 646 – Public Safety – Access to Firearms – Storage Requirements. This bill is a common-sense bill that will prevent minors from having access to guns in their homes.**

The laws that are currently in place don't require gunowners to lock their firearms, loaded or unloaded, in places where a minor can gain access to them. That means, right now there is nothing preventing a minor from finding a firearm in their own home and using it to inflict harm on themselves or others. Over and over again, we've seen school shootings, accidents, and suicides all involving firearms that were found in minor's homes. Senate Bill 646 would prevent this by requiring any gun owner in the state of Maryland to properly secure their firearms in their homes.

As a Jewish teen in 2020, I can directly relate the importance of this bill to teachings in Judaism. One aspect that can be related is *על דם רעך לא תאמוד* meaning, "do not stand idly by while your neighbor bleeds." In most recent years, it feels as though we have been doing exactly that. Shooting after shooting, it feels like we have been standing idly by, while failing to increase necessary safety measures. Another belief in Judaism, called *ועשתה מאקה לגגך*, directly translates to, "when you build a house, build a railing around the roof." Indirectly, this means that we should always preemptively consider the safety of others, even in something as private as our own house. Even though we may not believe that something as tragic as a shooting could happen to us, it's still very important to be aware of and care for the safety of everyone. Public safety should always be the number one priority, and currently, it does not seem like our state has built a "fence around their roof" to protect Maryland citizens.

In addition, we are all high school students and are constantly inundated with scenes of mass shootings taking place at schools around the country. Every day when we go to school, there's an underlying feeling of constant fear that we may become the next victims. Right now, there is nothing preventing a minor from taking their parents' guns and inflicting harm against themselves and others.

We should be able to have a sense of security knowing that we are safe from gun violence committed by a minor using their parents' guns.

We strongly encourage you to support Senate Bill 646. Prohibiting minors from gaining access to guns in their own homes. We hope that you agree with us that Senate Bill 646 is a commonsense solution that will prevent senseless acts of gun violence in the future. Thank you again for listening to what we have to say.