

Testimony on VIPP (SB708)

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16 Representing the Prevent Gun Violence Ministry at
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Bethesda

It's not **JUST** the money. It's **Dayquan Glenn**.

It's about an actual person and it's about a living community, ripped to shreds everytime a gunshot shatters the air in the Black neighborhoods of Baltimore. Where **Louis Henson** was shot and killed a week ago. It's **Jerron Davis**, murdered yesterday on Jamestown Court in Charm City.

We know because we've been there, where the heroes of Safe Streets, who stand between the combatants in Baltimore, ask members of our church to drive up from Bethesda to stand together with them at the site of a shooting in McElderry Park.

Our nearly all-white congregation listens to the names and lights the candles that mourn and honor the death of each person killed in Baltimore during the past month. Last Sunday they included **Oluwatobi Aihevba** and **Graham Blake**.

Let's please remember how Pharaoh held the children of Israel in bondage for 430 years, now that White Americans have inflicted the same punishment on the descendants of African Americans -- during 401 years of slavery, de-Reconstruction, Jim Crow, economic degradation, and just plain racism, that kept **Floyd Huntley**, **Howard Tyree**, and **Melissa Brown** down, until they were shot dead.

And while it's NOT JUST about the money, it's clear that a dependable stream of state funding, flowing into neighborhoods like McElderry Park, to mend the communities there, would have made a difference in saving the lives of **Myron Dingle**, and **Rawshad Divers**.

Let's make sure that stream flows unimpeded, like a balm of righteousness, from your support of this legislation.