



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony of Senator Jill P. Carter
In Favor of SB 708 - Maryland Violence Intervention and Prevention
Program Fund and Advisory
Council – Alterations
Before the Judicial Proceedings Committee
on March 5, 2020**

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee:

This legislation builds on the Maryland Violence Intervention and Prevention Program that the General Assembly established in the 2018 session. MD VIPP was created to provide state support for the evidence-based practices that have had great success in other states and cities in helping to break the cycle of violence. As passed in 2018, VIPP authorized but did not mandate up to \$10 million dollars annually for programs. This legislation mandates \$10 million and strengthens the evaluation component of the program. This bill will ensure that MD VIPP provides sustained and ongoing financial support to local governments and community-based organizations that use public health principles and demonstrate measurable positive outcomes in preventing violence, especially in regions that are disproportionately affected by violence.


Research has shown, time and again, that we simply cannot arrest our way to a less violent society. Cities from Oakland to Boston to Chicago have used anti-violence strategies that evidence has demonstrated work to stop the cycle of killing. Cities have used programs like focused deterrence, street outreach and mediation, and cognitive behavioral therapy-based programming. These types of programs require sustained funding and evaluation.

To reduce crime, to increase public safety, we must invest in programs that engage with high-risk individuals, help stop the cycle of violence, and provide a path forward for individuals to reimagine their lives without violence. The deaths and injuries impose massive social and economic burdens on the state—costing an estimated \$1.3 billion per year to the state of Maryland. Several peer-reviewed studies estimate the cost of a single murder to be between \$10 m and \$19.2m. These estimates include direct and indirect costs like lost labor and property damage, and medical and justice system costs, and diminished quality of life.

Although this bill comes with a price tag, there is no more important use of funding than saving lives and stopping the bleeding in our state. Compared to the overall cost of violence in Maryland, this funding is minimal. We can no longer say, “we don’t know what to do,” because these programs show us what to do. Tested strategies exist that have shown huge decreases in violence in a more cost-effective way than policing. Those are the strategies that MD VIPP will seed and encourage.

You will hear from panelists about the great work that programs funded by MD VIPP is doing. The results are remarkable. The potential is far too great to let slip away for lack of funding. But without financial support, none of this can happen. I urge a favorable report of SB 708.

Very Truly Yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jill P. Carter". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "J" and a distinct "P" and "C".

Jill P. Carter