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WRITTEN TESTIMONY

Senate Bill 479 – Public Safety – Access to Firearms – Storage Requirements (Jaelynn's Law)

Judicial Proceedings Committee

February 11, 2021

SUPPORT

Background: Senate Bill 479 (SB479) would prohibit gun owners from leaving a firearm unsecured in a location that would enable an unsupervised minor to gain access to it.

Written Comments: The Baltimore Jewish Council is dedicated to helping improve safety for everyone in the Baltimore community of all faith backgrounds. This bill would help ensure that more homes are safe from deadly weapons being used in the most horrific accidents imaginable – involving innocent children. Guns belong only in the hands of those who are legally allowed to possess them, and who have the deep knowledge and training that is required to safely operate them. This bill is a simple measure to ensure that the commonsense safety practices that should be standard for every responsible gun owner, becomes the norm for all.

One does not have to take the truly horrifying journey of imagining the possibilities of what could happen if an unsupervised child gains access to a firearm. Unfortunately, far too many examples exist already. Incidents of suicide and accidental self-inflicted gunshots happen at alarming rates by minors who use their parents' guns. Instances of accidents and homicides when minors take their parents' guns out of the house are just as prevalent. Students in school buildings already live with the unacceptable but constant fear of gun violence. They should not have to worry about it coming from another student using firearms they took from their parents. As a state we need to be doing everything we can to stop these incidents from ever occurring again.

Firearms do not belong in the hands of children. We limit gun ownership to adults for a reason, and it is commonsense for our laws to reflect this in every way possible, including how they are stored.

With this in mind, the Baltimore Jewish Council urges a favorable report on SB479.

The Baltimore Jewish Council, a coalition of central Maryland Jewish organizations and congregations, advocates at all levels of government, on a variety of social welfare, economic and religious concerns, to protect and promote the interests of The Associated Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore, its agencies and the Greater Baltimore Jewish community.

BALTIMORE JEWISH COUNCIL

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