



Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

Testimony in Support of SB 479- Public Safety - Access to Firearms - Storage Requirements (Jaelynn's Law)

TO: Senator Will Smith, Chair, and Members of the Judicial Proceedings
Committee

FROM: Janice Bird, MD UULM-MD Gun Violence Task Force Chair,
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland.

DATE: February 11, 2021

We, Unitarian Universalists, believe that we all belong to an interconnected community responsible for the safety and well-being of all. We believe that victims and their family deserve our “thoughts and prayers.” However, when firearms are the cause of their suffering, we should take steps to prevent this harm, where possible.

Gun Violence affects all of us and we know that common sense gun laws have saved lives! Wendi Winters was one of our faith and a beloved, vibrant member of our Annapolis congregation. She was a victim of gun violence at the Capital Gazette shooting in June 2018.

Some of you were Maryland legislators when the Firearms Act of 2013 was signed into law. These measures have been demonstrated to be effective in decreasing gun violence without compromising the rights of law-abiding citizens.

Last year, we were able to testify in person for this Safe Storage and Child Access Prevention bill that would strengthen current Maryland law by decreasing access to guns by children under the age of 18. We know that unlocked guns in the home will increase the risk of accidental and intentional gun injuries and suicide. Studies have shown that preventing children’s access to guns will decrease suicides by guns and save lives.

The measure before you today is another tool to protect all of us from gun violence. We ask our legislators to stand on the side of love and justice and vote for this bill and others that strengthen Maryland’s gun violence prevention laws.

We urge a favorable report,

Janice Bird, MD