



**Testimony in Support of Public Safety -
Local Violence Review Committees
SB406/HB 93**

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Marylanders to Prevent Gun Violence
and**

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Dear Chair Clippenger, Vice-Chair Atterbeary, and Members of the Judiciary Committee,

Marylanders to Prevent Gun Violence is a statewide grassroots organization dedicated to reducing gun deaths and injuries throughout the state of Maryland, with a particular focus on reducing urban gun violence and gun suicide. Our work ranges from addressing data-driven legislative change, leading a violence intervention and prevention coalition, and running programs for at-risk children. Our mission is to work toward ending the cycles of violence that plague our state. We do not always think that legislation is the answer, but where it is, where the data shows that it works, we pursue that option. **We urge the committee to vote FAVORABLY on House Bill 93 to empower local jurisdictions with the authority to establish youth violence review committees.**

Dr. Kessel has spent over four decades as a pediatrician working to promote child and family well-being and prevent untoward harm to children. He and his colleagues analyze data related to morbidity and mortality of their patients for information related to causes and consequences. Over the years many of these analyses have led to a number of successful programs and interventions to improve child health. While this data analysis has enormous strengths, over time it became clear that they were unable to capture enough detail as not every parameter is measured in a data set on every aspect of illness and death to formulate effective prevention strategies. They realized that they needed to dig deeper.

To address this need, Dr. Kessel and his colleagues built on an approach called “M and M” used by surgeons (Morbidity and Mortality - weekly conferences examining charts and consulting experts). They devised a review process that included: traditional birth and death certificate data, medical record data, and testimony from salient health professionals

who had contact with patients. This approach evolved into the creation of Maternal Mortality Review committees, Fetal - Infant Mortality Review Committees, and Child Death Review Committees. The efforts, launched early in Dr. Kessel's career, created specific protocols protecting confidentiality and privacy while still allowing experts to gain a deeper perspective of these triggering events than previous assessments provided. The objective was to gain a better understanding of how and why children died through a comprehensive dynamic examination of events and circumstances with both quantitative and qualitative assessments of factors possibly contributing to a child's death. They focused not only on available data but also on evaluating the quality of care, delivery systems factors, and social circumstances that may have contributed to the child's death. Understanding these potential factors can help improve systems and procedures in order to prevent future failures.

Marylanders to Prevent Gun Violence strives to use a data-informed approach to steering out work. We therefore support applying data analysis and review committees to the devastating issue of youth violence and violence related deaths. Empowering local jurisdictions with the authority to establish youth violence review committees will help to determine the causes of youth violence and lead to improvements to reduce these unfortunate instances. We urge the committee to vote **FAVORABLY** on HB93.