



EMERGENCY NURSES
ASSOCIATION

Maryland State Council
Safe Practice Safe Care

To: Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
Miller Senate Office Building
Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

From: Maryland State Council of the Emergency Nurses Association

Date: March 15, 2022

Re: SB 676 Firearm Safety – Storage Requirements and Youth Suicide Prevention (Jaelynn’s Law) written testimony

My name is Lisa Tenney and I am providing favorable written testimony on behalf of The Maryland Emergency Nurses Association in favor of SB 676 Firearm Safety - Storage Requirements and Youth Suicide Prevention (Jaelynn's Law).

I took care of a 10-year boy named Darren in the Emergency Room who was accidentally shot in the face by his best friend, who was showing Darren his dad’s gun. Darren survived, but he lost his eye, and suffered from life-long brain trauma. Darren’s dreams were shattered all because of natural childhood curiosity and easy access to an unsecured gun. When a child is a victim of gun violence, especially at the hands of another child, lives are forever changed. Everyone involved is devastated. It is impossible to provide consolation to either family. Nurses often carry that secondary emotional trauma forever.

SB 676 is not about the right to own a gun. This bill updates Maryland’s existing law about what constitutes proper storage to prevent senseless deaths, serious bodily injuries such as Darren’s, suicides, and shooting incidents involving minors.

Did you know that approximately 12.5 percent of the people who come to the ER are seeking help for their mental health problems? The Covid 19 pandemic has had a negative impact on adult and pediatric mental health. Maryland's ER beds are overflowing with adults and children with depression and suicidal intent. I have taken care of kids as young as six who want to kill themselves. When children, especially adolescents, are suicidal, they tend to act impulsively. When they get an idea to kill themselves, or someone they feel has harmed them, they seek an easy means of doing it. Kids are familiar with the existence of firearms due to their excessive usage in America's video game and entertainment cultures. Putting physical barriers in the way of impulsive children who decide to solve their problems with firearms is a highly effective injury prevention method.

Reducing access to firearms through proper storage is not too much to ask of a gun owner. However, it is only fair that gunowners be educated on what is required of them. That is why the inclusion of an education program on safe firearm storage is such an important part of this legislation.

Emergency nurses in Maryland's trauma centers care for the victims of unintentional and intentional gunshot wounds every day. The Maryland Emergency Nurses Association strongly supports laws that prevent easy access to unsecured firearms. We ask for a favorable vote on SB 676.

Sincerely,

Lisa Tenney

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References:

Emergency Nurse Association. (2019) Firearm safety and injury prevention position statement. <https://www.ena.org/press-room/2019/03/01/ena-board-approves-firearm-safety-and-injury-prevention-position-statement>

Emergency Nurses Association. (2018) Study: In-depth emergency department suicide screenings should become common practice. <https://www.ena.org/press-room/2018/02/22/study-in-depth-emergency-department-suicide-screenings-should-become-common-practice>