



TO: The Honorable Luke Clippinger, Chair
Members, House Judiciary Committee
The Honorable Dana Stein

FROM: Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
J. Steven Wise
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DATE: February 23, 2022

RE: **SUPPORT** – House Bill 659 – *Firearm Safety – Storage Requirements and Youth Suicide Prevention*
(*Jaelynn's Law*)

The Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (MDAAP) is a statewide association representing more than 1,100 pediatricians and allied pediatric and adolescent healthcare practitioners in the State and is a strong and established advocate promoting the health and safety of all the children we serve. On behalf of MDAAP, we submit this letter of **support** for House Bill 659.

House Bill 659 strengthens Maryland's current requirements for a minor's access to firearms and firearm storage. The bill increases the age of a "child" from 16 to 18 for purposes of application of the storage requirements and specifies the requirements for minors to have access to firearms and for their storage. House Bill 659 also strengthens current penalties for failure to store a firearm as specified to include the potential imprisonment not to exceed three years if a minor is harmed as a result of the failure to properly store the firearm. The legislation also requires the Deputy Secretary for Public Health Services to develop a Youth Suicide Prevention and Firearm Safe Storage Guide, with recommendations from a stakeholder committee. The Guide is to be posted on the Maryland Department of Health's website and broadly distributed. The development and distribution of the Guide will enhance efforts to prevent youth suicide and reduce gun related injuries.

It has been well documented that the presence of unlocked guns in the home increases the risk of both accidental and intentional gun injuries. In fact, the vast majority of the guns used in youth suicide attempts and unintentional injuries were guns that were in the residence of the victim, a relative, or a friend. Strengthening Maryland's firearm storage requirements will keep dangerous firearms out of the hands of children and will reduce community and school shootings, unintentional shootings, and youth suicide. Passage of the storage requirements are long overdue. MDAAP urges a favorable report.

For more information call:

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