

Testimony of Mindy Landau, Brady United Against Gun Violence, Maryland State  
Executive Committee

Support for HB659

Before the Maryland Judiciary Committee

Good afternoon Chairman Clippinger, Vice-Chair Atterbeary, and other distinguished members of the Maryland House Judiciary Committee.

My name is Mindy Landau and I am a member of the Maryland State Executive Committee of Brady United Against Gun Violence, and a co-founder of its Montgomery County Chapter. Before retiring recently, I was a federal employee for 40 years.

I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony on Brady's support for HB659. This bill will encourage responsible gun storage, and save lives by expanding Maryland's existing child access prevention law to ensure that fewer minors can access firearms.

We know that 70-90 percent of firearms used in unintentional shootings, school shootings and suicides by minors come from their home, or from the homes of friends or relatives. And research consistently shows that the states with strong laws regulating the storage of firearms in households with minors experience significant reductions in firearm fatalities when compared to states with no such regulations.

Importantly, recent research found that states with the strongest Child Access Prevention laws — laws that apply if a child could potentially access an improperly-stored firearm — saw the greatest reduction in firearm fatalities among the children studied. This is exactly what this bill would do. The evidence shows how effective a bill like this will be.

It is also critical that this proposed bill expands the obligation to prevent all minors under the age of 18 from accessing firearms, because firearms are used in 44 percent of suicide deaths by 16 and 17-year olds. And research shows that state child access prevention laws reduce overall suicide rates among 14-17 year olds, strongly suggesting that minors are not using other methods when guns are inaccessible. Put simply: these bills save lives.

An expanded child access prevention bill will ensure that minors are more protected from unintentional firearm injuries including self-harm, and harming their peers in school shootings.

Thank you for your time and attention.

