



Committee: House Judiciary Committee

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

Hearing Date: February 23, 2022

Position: Support

The Maryland Nurses Association (MNA) supports *House Bill 659 – Firearm Safety - Storage Requirements and Youth Suicide Prevention (Jaelynn's Law)*. This bill will help reduce youth suicide and other firearm deaths by ensuring that firearms are stored in a way that is inaccessible to children.

Access to firearms is a significant risk factor for adolescent suicides.ⁱ Nationally, between 2015 and 2016, a firearm has been involved in 40% of the over 2,000 annual youth suicides.ⁱⁱ Extensive evidence shows that access to firearms increases the likelihood of death by suicide among youth:

- When a home contains unlocked guns the odds of a child or adolescent dying by firearm suicide is more than **twice** as high as in households where guns are locked.ⁱⁱⁱ
- The risk of suicide by gun is more than **twice** as high in households with loaded guns, as compared to households with unloaded guns.^{iv}

This legislation takes a commonsense approach by codifying best practice for safe firearm storage for adults around youth. We can save lives of our most vulnerable youth with this legislation. We ask for a favorable report on this legislation. If we can provide additional information, please contact Scott Tiffin at stiffin@policypartners.net.

ⁱ <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/means-matter/means-matter/risk/#:~:text=Twelve%20or%20more%20U.S.%20case,live%20in%20homes%20with%20guns.&text=Firearm%20access%20was%20a%20risk,for%20both%20males%20and%20females>.

ⁱⁱ <https://www.usnews.com/news/healthiest-communities/articles/2019-01-17/youth-suicide-rates-higher-in-states-with-more-gun-ownership>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.srcd.org/research/access-firearms-increases-child-and-adolescent-suicide>

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