



EMERGENCY NURSES  
ASSOCIATION

Maryland State Council  
Safe Practice Safe Care

To: Maryland House Judiciary Committee  
House Office Building  
6 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401

From: Maryland State Council of the Emergency Nurses Association

Date: February 23, 2022

Re: HB 659 Firearm Safety - Storage Requirements and Youth Suicide Prevention (Jaelynn's Law) Oral and written testimony  
Maryland Emergency Nurses Association requests a FAVORABLE vote

Good day Chairman Clippinger, Vice Chair Moon, and Committee members,

My name is Lisa Tenney and I am testifying on behalf of The Maryland Emergency Nurses Association in favor of HB 659 Firearm Safety - Storage Requirements and Youth Suicide Prevention (Jaelynn's Law).

I remember taking care of a 10-year boy named Darren in the Emergency Room, who was shot in the eye by his best friend. Darren survived, but he lost his eye, and suffered from life-long brain trauma. Darren's dreams were shattered all because of natural child 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 changed forever. Everyone involved is devastated. It is so gut wrenching and impossible to provide consolation to either family. Darren's family and his best friend's family sadly and bitterly parted ways.

This bill 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? Many of these adults and children are suicidal. I have taken care of kids as young as six who wanted to kill themselves. 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 HB 659.

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>