



Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

Testimony in Support of - HB 515 - Public Schools — Active Shooter Safety Drills — Requirements

TO: Senator Brian Feldman, Chair and Members of the Education, Energy
And Environment Committee
FROM: Ken Shilling, Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland
Gun Violence Prevention Lead Advocate
DATE: April 4, 2023

Unitarians Universalists recognize the need for school safety. We have a moral obligation and responsibility for children to learn in school without fear of gun violence.

I recently spoke to some high school students. They mentioned their concerns with active shooter drills. I then shared my high school experience — we did not need to have active shooter drills fifty to sixty years ago. They were stunned.

Presently, some school systems are implementing various ways to conduct active shooter drills. Some drills are conducted in ways which traumatize youth and teachers. We should be protecting our youth and school staff, not damaging them.

HB 515 provides that active shooter drills should be based on trauma-informed methods. It specifies that parents should be notified in advance of an active shooter drill. This gives parents the opportunity to decide what is best for their children.

HB 515 requires model content on safe firearms storage, and active shooter drills. Education on safe gun storage makes our schools safer.

We urge you to vote for an amended House Bill 515 with provisions on permitting and sensitive places. We ask you to stand on the side of love and justice. We believe that these provisions will strengthen school safety in Maryland.

We urge a favorable report,

Ken Shilling

Ken Shilling
Gun Violence Prevention Lead Advocate