



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB

P.O. Box 34047, Bethesda, MD 20827

www.womensdemocraticclub.org

**Senate Bill 185 - Maryland State Police Gun Center – Firearms Surrendered Under Final Protective Orders
Judicial Proceedings Committee – February 7, 2023
SUPPORT**

Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony concerning an important priority of the **Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club (WDC)** for the 2023 legislative session. WDC is one of the largest and most active Democratic clubs in our county with hundreds of politically active members, including many elected officials. WDC is joining with the House of Ruth, the Maryland Legislative Agenda for Women (MLAW), and Court Watch Montgomery to urge the passage of **SB0185** to require law enforcement agencies to provide information on firearms that are required to be surrendered under final protective orders to the Maryland Gun Center.

There is no question that domestic violence and gun violence are deeply interconnected. Everytown reports that nearly two-thirds of intimate partner homicides are committed with a gun.¹ Access to a gun by a violent intimate partner makes it five times more likely a woman will die at the hands of a domestic abuser.² Moreover, Black women are three times more likely than white women to be fatally shot by an intimate partner.³ The Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence (MNADV) reported that guns were used in 100 percent of the abusive partner deaths in 2020 in Maryland.⁴

By enacting legislation that requires people subject to domestic violence protective orders to surrender their firearms, Maryland lawmakers appropriately recognized that restricting the access of abusers to firearms can save lives.⁵ However, a law is only as good as its implementation. In Maryland's case, victims of abuse cannot be confident that the granting of final protective orders will ensure that their abusers do not have guns.

¹ "Guns and Violence Against Women," Everytown analysis of Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS), 2019. <https://everytownresearch.org/report/guns-and-violence-against-women-americas-uniquely-lethal-intimate-partner-violence-problem/>

² April M Zeoli, Alexander McCourt, Shani Buggs, Shannon Frattaroli, David Lilley, Daniel W Webster, Analysis of the Strength of Legal Firearms Restrictions for Perpetrators of Domestic Violence and Their Associations With Intimate Partner Homicide, *American Journal of Epidemiology*, Volume 187, Issue 11, November 2018, Pages 2365–2371, <https://doi.org/10.1093/aje/kwy174>

³ Everytown analysis of Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS), 2019.

⁴ 2020 Homicide Prevention Report, MNADV, page 3, <https://www.mnadv.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/2020-DV-Homicide-Prevention-Report.pdf>

⁵ Md. Code Fam. Law 4-506 (f)



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Maryland courts approve thousands of final protective orders each year that are subject to gun surrender requirements.⁶ Nevertheless, Maryland has not yet put into place a standard procedure to ensure state-wide compliance with its surrender requirements. There appears to be variation in the protocols applied by both the courts and law enforcement agencies to achieve compliance.

How many abusers surrender their firearms each year as required by law? We don't know. In Maryland, law enforcement agencies are not required to collect or report data on the firearms that have been surrendered, making it close to impossible for state officials to diagnose issues with implementation and improve enforcement. The organization Prosecutors Against Gun Violence states that careful and timely evaluation of the effectiveness of the removal/retrieval process is essential and recommends that data be collected at each stage of the process.⁷

WDC supports the reporting requirements of SB0185 because the Gun Center is the ideal repository for comprehensive data on guns that have been surrendered--data that can be a powerful tool in evaluating the effectiveness of current practices and policies and taking actions to proactively ensure that firearms are kept out of the hands of abusers.

We ask for your support for SB0185 and strongly urge a favorable Committee report.

Diana E. Conway
WDC President

Carol Cichowski
WDC Advocacy Committee

⁶ According to the MNADV, Maryland courts granted over 10,000 final protective orders in Fiscal Year 2018. Maryland DV Statistics, <https://everytownresearch.org/report/guns-and-violence-against-women-americas-uniquely-lethal-intimate-partner-violence-problem/>

⁷ "Firearm Removal/Retrieval in Cases of Domestic Violence, Prosecutors Against Gun Violence and the Consortium for Risk-based Firearm Policy (February 2016), <http://efsgv.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Removal-Report-Updated-2-11-16.pdf>