



JOHNS HOPKINS
BLOOMBERG SCHOOL
of PUBLIC HEALTH

Center for
Gun Violence Solutions

Testimony of Jen Pauliukonis – Director of Policy and Programming

Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions

In Support – Senate Bill 185

February 7, 2023

Dear Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the committee,

The Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions conducts and translates rigorous research to inform effective policy solutions, and develops, advocates for, and defends equitable and innovative policies and programs. **We urge the committee to support Senate Bill 185: Maryland State Police Data Collection of Firearms Surrendered Under Final Protective Orders.**

Using public health to address violence and injury requires using evidence and data to understand risk factors, develop policies, and evaluate the impact and effectiveness of that policy. There is strong evidence that laws prohibiting purchase and possession of domestic abusers and requiring firearm removal during the issuance of final protective orders, are effective at reducing intimate partner homicide and community violence.ⁱ Nearly half of all women killed in the United States are killed by a current or former intimate partner, and more than half of those were killed with a gun.^{ii iii} Intimate partner homicide often results in multiple victims, including the deaths of coworkers, friends, family members, and police officers. In fact, new research revealed that two-thirds of all mass shootings are either domestic violence incidents or perpetrated by shooters with a history of domestic violence.^{iv}

Laws that prevent abusers from accessing guns, like Maryland's current law to require the removal of firearms with the issuance of a protective order, have been shown to reduce intimate partner homicide by as much as 25%.^v To fully analyze and understand if and how Maryland's law is working to reduce domestic violence and intimate partner violence, we need the foundation for public health research: data.

Senate Bill 185 requires local law enforcement to report when firearms are removed or surrendered by respondents after the issuance of a final protective order. It does not create new gun laws. It does not create more laws related to domestic violence. It merely requires the reporting of key information about the number and type of firearms removed from abusers to the Maryland State Police. This small step will help law enforcement, researchers, and policymakers understand how the law is being enforced and if it is having the desired impact to reduce intimate partner and family violence in our state.

Data is the foundation of public health. It enables experts to evaluate and improve policies over time through evidence and rigorous research. Senate Bill 185 supports this public health goal. **The Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence urges all the members of the committee to support Senate Bill 185.**

Thank you,

Jen Pauliukonis

Director of Policy and Programming

ⁱ Zeoli AM, & Webster DW. (2010). Effects of domestic violence policies, alcohol taxes and police staffing levels on intimate partner homicide in large US cities. *Injury Prevention, 16 (2) 90-05*.

ⁱⁱ Websdale N, Ferraro K, & Barger SD. (2019). The domestic violence fatality review clearinghouse: introduction to a new National Data System with a focus on firearms. *Injury Epidemiology, 6 (6)*.

ⁱⁱⁱZeoli AM. (2018). Multiple victim homicides, mass murders, and homicide suicides as domestic violence events. Battered Women's Justice Project.

^{iv} Geller, L.B., Booty, M. & Crifasi, C.K. (2021) The role of domestic violence in fatal mass shootings in the United States, 2014–2019. *Inj. Epidemiol. 8, 38*.

^v Zeoli AM, & Webster DW. (2010). Effects of domestic violence policies, alcohol taxes and police staffing levels on intimate partner homicide in large US cities. *Injury Prevention, 16 (2) 90-05*.