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February 6, 2023

The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.  
Chairperson, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee  
11 Bladen Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chairperson Smith:

I write on behalf of the Montgomery County State's Attorney's Office and the Maryland State's Attorney's Association in support of SB185, Maryland State Police Gun Center—Firearms Surrendered Under Final Protective Orders. I am the Chief of the Special Victims Division for the Montgomery County State's Attorney's Office and the chair of the Montgomery County Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team and the former chair of the Montgomery County Domestic Violence Coordinating Council. I am also a member of the Governor's Family Violence Council, and the co-chair the Special Victims Subcommittee for the Maryland State's Attorney's Association.

Currently, the Maryland State Police Gun Center maintains and tracks information on crimes committed with firearms, but does not track firearms surrendered under final protective orders. In 2020, 75% of all domestic violence deaths were caused by a firearm. An abuser's possession of a firearm is a predictor of future lethal behavior. Gathering data related to the surrender of firearms pursuant to a protective order is vital to understanding whether our current system of surrendering such firearms is effective. Moreover, requiring data collection will expose any gaps or substantial differences in the firearm surrender process in each jurisdiction.

Given the nexus to lethality, and the need to expose any gaps in the current surrender process, the Maryland State Police Gun Center should track firearms surrendered under final protective orders. I strongly urge the passage of SB185.

Sincerely,

Debbie Feinstein  
Chief, Special Victims' Division  
Senior Assistant State's Attorney