



SB185 - Maryland State Police Gun Center – Firearms Surrendered Under Final Protective Orders  
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee – February 7, 2023

Testimony of Adam Rosenberg, Executive Director, LifeBridge Health Center for Hope

Position: **SUPPORT**

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Center for Hope writes in support of SB185, which would require the Maryland State Police Gun Center to track, screen, and vet firearms surrendered under final protective orders (FTO) and require law enforcement agencies to report data on firearms surrendered under FTOs.

Since 2004, it has been a crime, triggering a mandatory arrest, for failure to surrender a firearm after an FTO has been issued (Md Code Fam. Law §4-509). Yet this law has not had centralized data collection for almost a decade and its implementation and enforcement varies widely by county.

Center for Hope, a subsidiary of LifeBridge Health, provides trauma-informed crisis intervention, nationally recognized child advocacy, forensic interviews, medical exams, mental health, wraparound case management, family advocacy, and workforce development to patients and community members who have experienced domestic violence, child abuse, elder abuse, and community/gun violence. We help over 6,000 violence victims and their families in the Baltimore region each year. As part of a hospital system, we value the importance of data-gathering and evidence-based action. Center for Hope has recently expanded our own data team to make sure that we are adequately tracking and measuring our programs, services, and client outcomes.

The Center for Hope includes two domestic violence programs, one of which is Northwest Hospital's DOVE program serving Baltimore County. During the last two years of COVID pandemic, DOVE experienced a 475% increase in request for shelter care, 222% increase in community referrals, and 25% increase in high risk clients of being killed. These numbers continue to remain at record levels of 1,500 victims of domestic violence helped each year.

Meanwhile, guns are becoming even more prevalent since this summer, when the U.S. Supreme Court in *New York State Rifle and Pistol Association (NYSRPA) v. Bruen* declared unconstitutional New York's "proper cause" requirement for issuance of a permit to carry a handgun. As the Maryland State Police reported in January, 2023 to this committee, since *Bruen*, state handgun "wear and carry" applications have exploded: from about 18,000 per year to about 18,000 per month.

More domestic violence and more guns spell danger, the very danger that our firearm surrender law means to prevent. We applaud Maryland's efforts to better understand how, if, and when its FTO firearm surrender law is being enforced.

We urge a favorable report on SB185.

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