



BILL NO: House Bill 307
TITLE: Firearm Safety - Storage Requirements and Youth Suicide Prevention
(Jaelynn's Law)
COMMITTEE: Judiciary
HEARING DATE: February 15, 2023
POSITION: **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS**

The Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence (MNADV) is the state domestic violence coalition that brings together victim service providers, allied professionals, and concerned individuals for the common purpose of reducing intimate partner and family violence and its harmful effects on our citizens. **MNADV urges the Judiciary Committee to issue a favorable report with amendments on HB 307.**

MNADV would request that the definition of prohibited persons be amended to specifically include prohibited persons pursuant to § 4-506 of the Family Law Article.

The risk of homicide for women increases by 500% with the presence of a gun in the home.¹ The 2021 domestic violence homicide numbers were the highest they have been in over ten years.² There were 58 Marylanders that lost their lives as the result of domestic violence in 2021. At least 47 children were left behind as a result of these deaths. A firearm was used in 76% of the deaths.

The most dangerous time for a victim of domestic violence is when they leave, increasing the risk of homicide as well as increased violence.³ Pursuant to a final order of protection a court, “shall order the respondent to surrender to law enforcement authorities any firearm in the respondent's possession, and to refrain from possession of any firearm, for the duration of the protective order.”⁴ It is within the court’s discretion whether to order the surrender of firearms for interim and temporary orders of protection. In January 2023 firearms were ordered to be surrendered by 882 individuals pursuant to final orders of protection and 274 orders to vacate a home were rendered.⁵

¹ The National Domestic Violence Hotline, Retrieved 1/29/21, <https://www.thehotline.org/resources/safety-planning-around-guns-and-firearms/>

² https://www.mnadv.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/2022-Memorial-Program-Trifold_Final-Version.pdf

³ <https://ncadv.org/why-do-victims-stay>

⁴ MD FAMILY § 4-506

⁵ https://mdcourts.gov/data/dv/DVCR_Statewide_2023_1.pdf



House Bill 307 would require the safe storage of firearms away from both children and prohibited persons. When looking at the constellation of factors of the risk of lethality for victims of domestic violence with the presence of a firearm, the risk of lethality for a victim when they leave, and the status of the respondent of a final order of protection as a prohibited person, it is a sound policy decision to include prohibited persons in the safe storage laws in Maryland.

For the above stated reasons, the **Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence urges a favorable report with amendments on HB 307.**