



HB307 – Firearm Safety – Storage Requirements and Youth Suicide Prevention (Jaelynn’s Law)

House Judiciary Committee

February 15, 2022

Testimony of Martha Nathanson, Vice President, Government Relations and Community Development;  
Adam Rosenberg, Vice President, Violence Intervention and Prevention

Position: **SUPPORT**

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We are pleased to **SUPPORT** HB307, which requires gun owners to safely store their guns to prevent access by unsupervised minors, increases penalties for failing to do so; and provides for a safe storage education campaign for parent, children, and adults.

Center for Hope, a subsidiary of LifeBridge Health, provides trauma-informed crisis intervention and prevention services to over 6,000 patients and community members each year who have experienced domestic violence, child abuse, elder abuse, and community/gun violence. We operate hospital response and violence interruption teams for patients who have been injured by gun violence, as well as support programs for children who have witnessed or been affected by gun violence.

A 2021 survey indicated that in nearly half of households with firearms and children, guns are stored unlocked, and the guns were stored *loaded* and unlocked in an estimated 15% of these homes.<sup>1</sup> About 80% of the guns used in suicides, school shootings, and unintentional shooting deaths among children come from homes of friends or relatives.<sup>2</sup> Of the 7 child suicides in Baltimore City between 2016 and 2021, two children accessed inappropriately accessible guns from home.<sup>3</sup>

We strongly support the elements of HB307 that require a public health campaign in the form of a Youth Suicide Prevention and Safe Firearm Storage Guide. Enabling individuals and communities to prevent violent injury and death is critical not only to improving the survival and ultimately health outcomes of residents but also to breaking the cycle of violence. New penalties have little deterrence value if gun owners aren’t aware of them.

For all the above reasons, we urge a **FAVORABLE** report on HB307.

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<sup>1</sup> The Effects of Child Access Prevention Laws, RAND Corporation (January 2023)

<sup>2</sup> Id.

<sup>3</sup> <https://health.baltimorecity.gov/sites/default/files/2021%20Baltimore%20City%20CFR%205-Year%20Report.pdf> (page 50).