

SB0475_RichardKaplowitz_FAV
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TESTIMONY ON SB#0475 - POSITION: FAVORABLE

Center for Firearm Violence Prevention – Establishment

TO: Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Klausmeier and members of the Finance Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB#0475, Center for Firearm Violence Prevention – Establishment

Gun violence is an epidemic in our society, in our country, and in Maryland. As reported by Everytown For Gun Safety: “In Maryland, the rate of gun deaths increased 36% from 2010 to 2019, compared to a 17% increase nationwide. The rate of gun suicides increased 10% and gun homicides increased 53%, compared to a 13% increase and 26% increase nationwide, respectively.”¹ 2024 has seen at least one mass gun violence shooting every day so far.

This bill is an attempt, as outlined by Governor Moore, to treat gun violence as the public health emergency it has become. It will partner the state with both Federal and local agencies and affected communities to implement a public health approach to firearm violence reduction.

This bill adds tools for treatment of the public health emergency guns have created in Maryland and will help us understand and create ways for keeping people safe from gun violence. In testimony against another bill urging creation of a Center for Firearm Violence and Intervention even the NRA representative’s testimony seems to point at the bill also. “Taylor McKee, mid-Atlantic regional director for the National Rifle Association, testified against some of the gun safety bills introduced in this session, telling the committee members, “The real solution to Maryland’s crime issues lie not in creating more bureaucratic entities, but rather in **strengthening policies and practices that target and punish criminal activities directly** (emphasis added)²”. While punishment of the perpetrator is necessary we have to consider the victims and how to heal them and the community.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB0475.

¹ <https://everystat.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Gun-Violence-in-Maryland-2.9.2021.pdf>

² <https://wtop.com/maryland/2024/02/maryland-governors-bill-to-take-a-public-health-approach-to-gun-violence-gets-a-hearing-in-annapolis/>