

HB0869_RichardKaplowitz_FAV
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TESTIMONY ON HB#0869 - POSITION: FAVORABLE

Public Safety – Firearm Background Checks, Victim Notification, and the Maryland State Police Gun Center

TO: Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Bartlett, and members of the Judiciary 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 HB#0869, Public Safety – Firearm Background Checks, Victim Notification, and the Maryland State Police Gun Center

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 enforce a “red flag” provision when a prohibited person attempting to acquire a firearm fails a background check. A victim of prior action by that prohibited person can be informed of the situation to take common sense precautions to protect their safety against actions the person failing that background check might initiate against them.

This bill adds a tool to law enforcement in 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 the bill, 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””. That is what this bill is attempting to do, target and punish criminal activities directly. It emphasizes the ability to protect a victim of violence from possible future gun violence against them.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB0869.

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/>