



February 29, 2024

**Senate Bill 475**

**Center for Firearm Violence Prevention - Establishment**

**Senate Finance Committee**

**Position: FAVORABLE**

Anne Arundel County **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill 475 – Center for Firearm Violence Prevention - Establishment. This Bill would establish the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention in the Maryland Department of Health to partner with federal, state, and local agencies and affected communities to reduce firearm violence, harm from firearm violence, and misuse of firearms in the State through a public health approach.

In the first year of my first term, we established the Gun Violence Prevention Task Force (GVPTF), comprised of individuals representing a broad spectrum of experience and expertise in public safety, emergency operations, behavioral health and community outreach. The GVPTF was tasked with researching how the public health system could be used to address individuals in need of behavioral health services who may be at risk to commit or be the victim of gun violence and produce actionable recommendations to reduce gun violence in Anne Arundel County. Recognizing that gun violence is a public health crisis, the task force’s final report<sup>1</sup> included 55 recommendations, including the establishment of a collaborative body of government and non-government agencies to coordinate gun violence initiatives within Anne Arundel County and to implement the recommendations of the Task Force.

This critical piece of legislation takes the same approach that we have taken in Anne Arundel County at the state level to reduce gun violence, including firearm-related homicides and suicides. By partnering with stakeholders across government and communities, and addressing gun violence as a public health crisis rather than a political one, we can make real meaningful progress towards reducing our tragically high rate of gun violence and make all of our communities safer.

For all of these reasons, I respectfully request a **FAVORABLE** report on Senate Bill 475.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Steuart Pittman".

Steuart Pittman  
County Executive

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<sup>1</sup> Available at:

<https://www.aacounty.org/sites/default/files/2023-07/gun-violence-task-force-final-report-20200605.pdf>