



BILL NO: Senate Bill 475
TITLE: Center for Firearm Violence Prevention - Establishment
COMMITTEE: Finance
HEARING DATE: February 29, 2024
POSITION: **SUPPORT**

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 Senate Finance Committee to issue a favorable report on SB 475.**

Of the 38 domestic violence related deaths in Maryland in 2023, 74% were caused by guns. Higher rates of firearm ownership correlate to a higher rate of domestic violence homicide according to a 2019 study.¹ There is a 65% higher incidence rate of domestic firearm homicide in the states with the highest firearm ownership compared to states with lower ownership rates.² Since women are the most common victims of domestic violence homicide, they are most at risk with increased gun ownership.³ The risk of homicide for women increases by 500% with the presence of a gun in the home.⁴

Senate Bill 475 would establish the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention in the Maryland Department of Health to reduce firearm violence, harm from firearm violence, and misuse of firearms in the State. MNADV supports a public health approach to the reduction of all firearm violence including the firearm violence present in domestic violence. MNADV provides technical assistance to the Domestic Violence Fatality Review Teams across the State and oversees the Domestic Violence Fatality Review State Implementation Team. We believe SB 475 and the creation of the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention could benefit victims of domestic violence.

For the above stated reasons, the **Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence urges a favorable report on SB 475.**

¹ Kivisto, A.J., Magee, L.A., Phalen, P.L., Ray, B.R. (2019). Firearm ownership and domestic versus nondomestic homicide in the U.S. American Journal of Preventive Medicine, Abstract: [https://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797\(19\)30197-7/fulltext#articleInformation](https://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797(19)30197-7/fulltext#articleInformation)

² Merovsh, Sarah. "Gun Ownership Rates Tied to Domestic Homicides, but Not Other Killings, Study Finds," NY Times, (July 22, 2019) <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/22/us/gun-ownership-violence-statistics.html>

³ *Id.*

⁴ The National Domestic Violence Hotline, Retrieved 1/29/21, <https://www.thehotline.org/resources/safety-planning-around-guns-and-firearms/>

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