



Written Testimony of Tarrisa Stanley  
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Senate Bill 0475  
Center for Firearm Violence Prevention - Establishment

Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Klausmeier and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am here today on behalf of Community Justice and as co-lead of the Marylanders to Prevent Gun Violence coalition. Community Justice is a national organization that advocates for gun violence prevention by empowering those closest to the pain to advance lifesaving solutions. The Marylanders to Prevent Gun Violence coalition includes nearly 90 members throughout the state representing leading researchers, medical professionals, survivors, and community violence prevention experts.

Gun violence devastates families and communities every single day. In [Maryland, each year an average of nearly 800 people die, and over 1,360 more are wounded by guns](#). The trauma of gun violence isn't just felt by victims and survivors — it impacts entire communities and is felt throughout the state. And its economic costs are staggering. Gun violence [costs](#) the state of Maryland \$10.5 billion annually, \$383.9 million of which is paid by taxpayers.

The consequences of gun violence permeates nearly every facet of society. This includes acknowledging the economical impact of gun violence. Although, we cannot put a price on a human life, we cannot ignore just how extensive gun violence is in Maryland. The \$10 million proposed for the center breaks down into: contractual services \$8.7 grants \$1.0 million, salaries and fringe benefits \$2.6 million, operating expenses \$2.1 million. This is just the start of committing to extend the life-saving work that's happening in Maryland.

We cannot and must not stand by as more of our family, children, friends, and neighbors continue to die from gun violence when we have evidence-based public health solutions that stop gun violence before it happens. Senate Bill 0475 is a vital first step in making sure we are sufficiently investing statewide in proven community-led violence prevention strategies. It would establish the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention within the state health department tasked with creating a whole-of-government violence prevention strategy informed by data, evidence, and importantly, the communities that are most impacted.. This Center would also provide vital funding and support directly to community-based organizations working every day to save lives.

Community Justice and the Marylanders to Prevent Gun Violence coalition strongly urges the committee to advance Senate Bill 0475. Marylanders deserve permanent statewide solutions that focus on the prevention and intervention of firearm violence in all of its forms, ultimately saving lives, strengthening communities, and saving millions of taxpayer dollars.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify in support of this vital legislation.