



## TESTIMONY TO THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

### SB0475: Center for Firearm Violence Prevention- Establishment

**POSITION: Support**

**BY: Linda Kohn, President**

**DATE: February 29, 2024**

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan organization that works to influence public policy through education and advocacy. The League supports the development of community programs which emphasize the primary prevention of violence, and believes that the proliferation of handguns and semi-automatic weapons in the United States is a major health and safety threat to its residents.

The League of Women Voters Maryland thus supports **Senate Bill 475: Center for Firearm Violence Prevention- Establishment.**

Establishing the Center within the Department of Health will enable it to focus on **treating gun violence not only as a public safety issue, but as the major public health crisis it is.**

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,<sup>1</sup> there were more than 48,000 firearm-related deaths in the US in 2022, and **“firearm injuries were the leading cause of death among children and teens age 1-19.”** The CDC notes that **“The effects of firearm violence extend beyond victims and their families. Shooting incidents, including those in homes, schools, houses of worship, workplaces, shopping areas, on the street or at community events can affect the sense of safety and security of entire communities...”**

**Reducing firearm violence is of crucial importance to our families, our schools, our communities, and our state. The League of Women Voters Maryland, representing 1,500+ concerned members throughout Maryland, urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 475.**

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<sup>1</sup><https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/firearms/fastfact.html#:~:text=A%20firearm%20injury%20is%20a,charge%20to%20fire%20a%20projectile>