

CFH SB475 Testimony -Session 2024.pdf

Uploaded by: Adam Rosenberg

Position: FAV



February 29, 2024

To: Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Klausmeier and the Finance Committee
Reference: SB475 - Center for Firearm Violence Prevention - Establishment
Position: **SUPPORT**

Dear Chair Beidle and Committee Members:

On behalf of LifeBridge Health's Center for Hope we thank you for this opportunity to provide information in strong support for SB475. Center for Hope annually provides intervention and prevention services for over 7,700 survivors and caregivers impacted by child abuse, domestic violence, community violence, and elder justice. Over 4,300 of our population helped last year were children – many who were witness to, affected by, living regularly with gun violence. At LifeBridge Health, we recognize the devastating impact of violence in our communities, and the growing number of victims of all ages. This is a public health issue. We help our communities by partnering with the people in them to break the cycle of violence. At Center for Hope, we partner with community leaders, stand shoulder to shoulder with parents and caregivers, and help provide survivors of violence and crime with support and healing, in order to grow a collective hope for a better city and a better world.

Firearm injuries is now the leading cause of death for children across the United States¹. An alarming 4,752 children died from firearm injuries in 2021 - the American Academy of Pediatrics reports that is a 41.6% increase in pediatric firearm deaths from 2018 to 2021². According to data released this week by the Ad Council Research Institute, an overwhelming majority of adults in America (79%) find gun violence to be one of their top concerns³.

Use of a firearm has also become the leading form of suicide in the United States. In America, 67 people die by gun suicide every day – which is more than the number of people who die from firearm murders and unintentional shootings combined⁴. Access to a firearm triples the risk of death by suicide, and on average suicide attempts by a gun are fatal 90% of the time. Evidence shows that in a moment of crisis, having a firearm that is stored securely — locked, unloaded, and away from ammunition — can prevent those fatal outcomes.⁵

¹ <https://www.kff.org/mental-health/issue-brief/child-and-teen-firearm-mortality-in-the-u-s-and-peer-countries/>

² <https://publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article/152/3/e2023061296/193711/Trends-and-Disparities-in-Firearm-Deaths-Among?autologincheck=redirected>

³ <https://www.adcouncil.org/learn-with-us/ad-council-research-institute/pulse-gun-violence-in-america-poll>

⁴ <https://www.bradyunited.org/key-statistics>

⁵ <https://www.adcouncil.org/learn-with-us/press-releases/safe-stories-national-psa-campaign-responds-to-growing-gun-suicide-epidemic#:~:text=In%20the%20U.S.%2C%2067%20people,of%20the%20time%20on%20average.>

From Baltimore City to Baltimore County to Carroll County, Center for Hope and its parent organization LifeBridge Health has seen the tremendous impact that gun violence has had upon our community and its health care. For many years now, including our 2023 recent community health needs assessment, our neighbors have told us that violence and mental health are among their top health concerns. Our health system recognizes its role in keeping its community safe and in preventing gun violence as a health care priority. Our communities and our country demand solutions and answers now.

Just as LifeBridge Health has taken a public health approach to reducing gun violence, we applaud and stand by Maryland's efforts to reduce the harm from firearm violence. Public health approaches to societal issues have provided great success in Maryland to reduce future harm and injury: for example, B'more for Healthy Babies has been a campaign to reduce infant mortality in Baltimore City through emphasis on policy change, service improvements, community mobilization, and behavioral change – this has improved infant mortality by 28% since the initiative's launch. Similar campaigns have reduced smoking deaths, auto injury, and reduced overdose fatalities.

Looking to find solutions for a reduction in gun violence is an issue of national importance and Maryland is a leader in finding solutions to reduce gun violence. The proposal of a state level office mirrors that of the strategy from the White House to establish a similar office and will greatly benefit from coordination with federal partners.

Within LifeBridge Health, our Center for Hope is seeing success through a combination of coordinated gun violence responses. In Baltimore City, through our coordinated efforts, we have seen a remarkable 28% reduction in gunshot wound admissions in the Sinai Emergency Department (a level II center) from FY22 to FY23. Those decreases continue today with an additional 50% drop this year to date. Our efforts with community violence interrupters, credible messengers, and coordinated services can be emblematic to similar statewide efforts and solutions.

We urge you to support and give SB475 a favorable report to establish a Center for Firearm Violence Prevention and Intervention within the Maryland Department of Health. By embracing a public health approach and investing in community-driven solutions, we can create a safer and more just Maryland for generations to come.

Respectfully submitted,

Adam Rosenberg
LifeBridge Health, Vice President, Violence Intervention and Prevention
Executive Director, Center for Hope
arosenberg@lifebridgehealth.org
Phone: 410-469-4654

2024-02-29 SB475 (Support).pdf

Uploaded by: Adam Spangler

Position: FAV

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February 14, 2024

TO: The Honorable Pam Beidle
Chair, Finance Committee

FROM: Tiffany Johnson Clark
Chief, Legislative Affairs, Office of the Attorney General

RE: House Bill 475 – Center for Firearm Prevention – Establishment – **Support**

The Office of the Attorney General requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 475. Senate Bill 475 – Center for Firearm Prevention - Establishment, an Administration bill, establishes the Center of Firearm Violence Prevention in the Maryland Department of Health to reduce firearm violence, harm from firearm violence, and misuse of firearms in the State by taking a public health approach to firearm violence reduction.

According to the Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions, Maryland has the tenth highest gun homicide and assault rate in the United States. Each year, gun violence in Maryland causes approximately 474 deaths and 551 injuries. Gun violence tends to be concentrated among a small number of people living in overburdened and underserved communities. These individuals are often caught in cycles of victimization, trauma, and retaliatory violence equities. Senate Bill 475 requires the newly established Center to solicit and consider recommendations from communities that are disproportionately impacted by gun violence. Up until recently, this part of the equation to curbing gun violence in communities has been lacking. To address violence in the most impacted communities, it is critically important to understand the root of the problem from those who are most impacted by it.

Taking a public health approach to gun violence prevention in communities is imperative because it affects everyone in the community – not just the shooters and victims. In September 2023, President Biden established the White House Office of Gun Violence Prevention to reduce gun violence. It is a national epidemic in our nation.

Information is key to prevention. We cannot effectively combat firearm violence without understanding when, where, and how firearm crimes occur. Knowing who is committing firearm crimes and where firearms are being introduced into the community will allow us as a State to target preventative initiatives appropriately.

For the foregoing reasons the Office of the Attorney General requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 475.

cc: Governor's Legislative Office
Finance Committee Members

Children's National Testimony - SB 475 - Katie Don

Uploaded by: Austin Morris

Position: FAV



111 Michigan Ave NW
Washington, DC 20010-2916
ChildrensNational.org

Testimony of Katie Donnelly, MD, MPH
Associate Professor of Pediatrics and Emergency Medicine
Medical Director, Youth Violence Intervention Program
Children's National Hospital
before
Senate Finance Committee
IN SUPPORT OF
SB 475: Center for Firearm Violence Prevention – Establishment

February 29, 2024

Chairwoman Beidle, Vice Chair Klausmeier and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in favor of Senate Bill 475. My name is Katie Donnelly, MD, MPH, and I am the Medical Director of the Youth Violence Intervention Program and Associate Professor of Pediatrics and Emergency Medicine at Children's National Hospital. Children's National has been serving the nation's children since 1870. Nearly 60% of our patients are residents of Maryland, and we maintain a network of community-based pediatric practices, surgery centers and regional outpatient centers in Maryland.

Our Youth Violence Intervention Program serves children who have been shot, stabbed or seriously physically assaulted who seek care in our Emergency Department. Violence does not respect state lines, and though our Emergency Department is located in DC, we have served more than one hundred Maryland children for assault injuries in the past year, including 12 children that had been injured by firearms. Yet we know that this grossly underestimates the number of Maryland children injured by gun violence. Per the Gun Violence Archive, thirty-seven children were killed due to firearms in Maryland in 2023.¹ This number includes two two-year-olds, a six-year-old and a twelve-year-old. Another one hundred and forty were injured. Clearly, these preventable deaths and injuries should spur us to find solutions.

¹ The Gun Violence Archive.2024. Accessed February 8th 2024. <https://gunviolencearchive.org/query>.

Senate Bill 475 will help address this tide of violent injury for our young people by establishing a Center for Firearm Violence Prevention. This Center can direct research into and the implementation of evidence-based solutions to prevent gun violence. The Center can also support proven solutions, such as the hospital-based violence intervention programs already in place at Maryland hospitals. The requirement for a state plan to address gun violence is also appreciated, as it fosters a long-term approach to this public health challenge. I am grateful that this bill aims to incorporate the recommendations and thoughts of communities highly impacted by gun violence. I would also recommend considering compensating those communities for sharing their experiences. Too often we expect unpaid labor from those who have been disproportionately impacted by violence.

Looking ahead, I would encourage the future Center leadership to consider these additional points. One, as mentioned above, violence does not respect state, county or city borders. How will the Center foster collaboration with programs both in the state of Maryland, the region, and across the United States? What we learn in Maryland could help in other states. Two, how can we support all who are impacted by gun violence? Too many of the children I see in my day-to-day work as an Emergency Medicine physician have lost a parent to gun violence, or have seen multiple siblings shot, or fear going to school because of gun violence. It affects families and entire communities. The proposed solution should too. Three, how do we ensure that the specific and unique needs of children are addressed by the Center? Addressing their needs today is critical to stemming the tide of violence in the future.

I applaud the efforts of the Governor and the Maryland General Assembly for prioritizing this groundbreaking legislation and for making Firearm Violence Prevention and Intervention a top priority. I respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 475.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony. I am happy to respond to any questions you may have.

SB475_HB583 GOCPP Supports.pdf

Uploaded by: Bethany Young

Position: FAV

WES MOORE
Governor

ARUNA MILLER
Lieutenant Governor



DOROTHY LENNIG
Executive Director

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 475

February 14, 2024

Bethany Young, Director of Policy and Legislation

The Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy's (GOCPP) role is to advise the Governor on criminal justice strategies, coordinate across public safety agencies, and allocate resources Statewide to support public safety.

Senate Bill 475 establishes a Center for Firearm Violence Prevention charged with coordinating a Statewide public health approach to reducing firearm violence and the harm it causes. It is unconscionable that firearm injuries are the leading cause of death for children in our nation. Gun violence is an epidemic warranting all of the resources we have at our disposal. Creating the Center is a critical step towards making Maryland safer.

GOCPP looks forward to collaborating with the Center and other State, local, and federal partners on a whole-of-government approach to reducing gun violence.

GOCPP urges the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee to report favorably on Senate Bill 475.

SB475- Center for Firearm Violence Prevention – Es

Uploaded by: Brian Sims

Position: FAV



Maryland
Hospital Association

February 29, 2024

To: The Honorable Pamela Beidle, Chair, Senate Finance Committee

Re: Letter of Support - Senate Bill 475 - Center for Firearm Violence Prevention – Establishment

Dear Chair Beidle:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment in support of Senate Bill 475, which establishes the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention to reduce the public health issue of firearm-related injuries.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) identifies firearm injuries as a serious public health problem, as 48,000 firearm-related deaths were recorded in 2022. More than half of those deaths were suicides, and more than four in 10 were homicides.¹ In Maryland, nearly 3,000 lives were lost between 2010 and 2020 due to self-inflicted harm with the use of a firearm—about 4.3 deaths per 100,000 Marylanders—according to the CDC.

Non-fatal firearm-related injuries in Maryland outnumber fatal injuries—22.6 per 100,000 versus 13.3 per 100,000. More than 70% of medically treated firearm injuries are a result of assault, while 20% of them are unintentional.² Individuals ages 25–44 constituted the largest proportion of non-fatal firearm injuries by age group in 2019–2020.

Firearm-related fatalities and injuries also have a significant financial on the state and the health care system. Gun deaths and injuries cost an estimated \$10.5 billion in Maryland each year, of which, at least \$389 million is paid by taxpayers.³ In 2016, the 1,652 shootings in Maryland cost \$70 million in health care expenses; \$154 million in law enforcement and criminal justice-related expenses; and \$9.1 million in costs to employers and lost income. On average, a non-fatal firearm injury that was treated and released cost \$29,234 and a hospitalized injury cost \$170,030.

Maryland's Total Cost of Care Model incentivizes approaches that prioritize population health and prevention strategies. As a public health issue, risk factors for injury by firearm are modifiable through strong policy and partnerships. Hospitals are inextricably linked to every firearm-related injury or fatality in the state and appreciate every effort to address this serious issue.

For these reasons, we request a *favorable* report on SB 475.

¹ Fast Facts: Firearm Violence and Injury Prevention, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/firearms/fastfact.html.

² At a Glance: Maryland, Everytown for Gun Safety, www.everytown.org/state/maryland.

³ Ted R. Miller and Bruce Lawrence analysis of CDC fatal injury: 2019 and HCUP nonfatal injury: 2019.



Maryland
Hospital Association

For more information, please contact:
Brian Sims, Vice President, Quality & Equity
Bsims@mhaonline.org

SB0475_Center_for_Firearm_Violence_Prevention_MLC_

Uploaded by: Cecilia Plante

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY FOR SB0475
Center for Firearm Violence Prevention - Establishment

Bill Sponsor: President

Committee: Finance

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: **FAVORABLE**

I am submitting this testimony in strong support of SB0475 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Firearm violence is escalating across the country due to the proliferation of firearms and the lack of laws that restrict use. Mass shootings are becoming commonplace and the number of residents, including children, who have died as a result of firearm violence has risen almost exponentially. Firearm violence has risen to the level of a public health crisis and we should treat it as such.

This bill, if enacted, would establish the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention in the Maryland Department of Health to reduce firearm violence, and misuse of firearms in the State by partnering with federal, State, and local agencies and affected communities to implement a public health approach to firearm violence reduction. It also requires the Center to submit a preliminary State Plan for a public health approach to reducing firearm violence by May 1, 2025.

We strongly support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.

CIF Gun Violence Center Testimony SB 475 2 29 24 f

Uploaded by: Clinton Wolcott

Position: FAV



**TESTIMONY OF THE CRITICAL ISSUES FORUM: ADVOCACY
FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
ON FEBRUARY 29, 2024,
BEFORE THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE
IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 475, REGARDING THE CREATION OF
A CENTER FOR FIREARMS VIOLENCE PREVENTION**

Honorable Chair Pamela Beidle, Vice-Chair Katherine Klausmeier, and Members of the Committee:

The Critical Issues Forum: Advocacy for Social Justice (CIF), provides this testimony in support of SB 475, which would establish a Center for Firearm Violence Prevention and Intervention within the Maryland Department of Health. We applaud Governor Moore's initiative to address the staggering toll that gun violence exacts in Maryland through a coordinated public health approach that addresses both the causes and effects of this problem.

CIF is a coalition of three synagogues, Temple Beth Ami, Kol Shalom, and Adat Shalom, that include over 1,750 households and three denominations of Judaism: Reform, Conservative, and Reconstructionist. CIF serves as a vehicle for our congregations to speak out on policy issues, such as gun violence prevention, that relate to our shared values, including the Jewish traditions that emphasizes the sanctity and primary value of human life.

The severity of Maryland's gun violence problem is undeniable. According to the most recent statistics compiled by Everytown for Gun Safety, Maryland suffers an average of almost 800 firearms fatalities each year and the rate of gun deaths rose over 50% from 2012 to 2022.¹ Perhaps the most disturbing element of this crisis is its effect on our children. Firearms are the leading cause of death in children and youth ages 1 to 21 in Maryland and the United States, surpassing injuries and death from motor vehicle crashes.² In Maryland, 131 children and teens died by gun violence in 2021, more than twice the number of deaths from motor vehicle

¹ <https://www.everytown.org/state/maryland/>

² CDC WISQARS On-line Causes of Injury-Related Death Data Base, Violence-related Firearm Deaths; Both Sexes; Age Range: 1 – 21; All Races and Ethnicity; US and Maryland; 2021.

crashes.³ Thirteen percent (13%) of the firearm deaths in Maryland were by suicide and 84% were homicides.⁴

The “whole-of-government” public health approach to reducing firearms violence outlined in Section 5203 of SB 475 offers an effective strategy for coordinating and enhancing both governmental efforts and the many effective community organizations that have been working so diligently to prevent gun violence and to deal with its results. It is clear that our state will not solve this problem solely through law enforcement strategies, and Section 5203’s focus on strengthening “evidence-based firearms violence prevention strategies” is likely to be very effective.

This evidence-based approach will allow the state to focus resources on communities hardest hit by gun violence. While gun violence affects the entire state, it is concentrated in low-income communities without adequate economic infrastructure. For example, Baltimore City’s gun homicide rate is 44.17 per 100,000 people⁵, compared to 8.9 statewide.⁶ This wide discrepancy in gun violence statistics is similar in other U.S. jurisdictions, where cities with the highest gun death rates and highest increase over time had higher proportions of residents living in poverty, higher rates of unemployment, and were more racially segregated than other communities.⁷

There are a wide variety of community-based programs that have proved effective in reducing gun violence and reducing its toll on individuals, including:

- Hospital Based Violence Intervention Programs that reach individuals immediately after they are injured and form relationships designed to reduce trauma and the risk of retaliation;
- Street Outreach Programs that interrupt cycles of violent conflict using credible messengers who act as mediators to prevent shootings, provide crisis response, and connect high-risk people with long-term support;
- Gun Violence Reduction Strategies that involve a partnership between law enforcement and communities to intervene with individuals at the highest risk of committing violence;
- Offices of Neighborhood Safety that take a holistic approach to neighborhood health and safety; and
- Suicide Prevention and Domestic Violence Victims Support Organizations.

³ Ibid

⁴ Ibid

⁵

<https://bigcitieshealthdata.org/compare/?city=2&cities=3&metrics=11-01-03&years=&groups=&sort=name&geoStata=>

⁶ <https://www.everytown.org/state/maryland/>

⁷ [Gun Deaths in Big Cities | Urban Health Collaborative | Drexel University](#)

These are a few examples of the kinds of programs that will benefit from the Center for Violence Prevention created by this bill. Health care professionals, local government agencies, and faith-based charitable organizations will also benefit from the training and technical assistance provided for in the bill.

For these reasons, CIF recommends a favorable report on SB 475.

Anne Arundel County _FAV_SB475.pdf

Uploaded by: Ethan Hunt

Position: FAV



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 report¹ 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

¹ Available at:
<https://www.aacounty.org/sites/default/files/2023-07/gun-violence-task-force-final-report-20200605.pdf>

MD Catholic Conference_SB 475_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Garrett O'Day

Position: FAV



**MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE**

February 29, 2024

SB 475

Center for Firearm Violence Prevention – Establishment

Senate Finance Committee

Position: FAVORABLE

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this testimony in support of Senate Bill 475. The Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals and numerous charities combine to form our state’s second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

Senate Bill 475 would establish the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention with the Maryland Department of Health. The statutory goals of the Center will be to reduce firearm violence and misuse of firearms in the state by partnering with federal, state, and local agencies and affected communities to implement a public health approach to firearm violence reduction.

In 2022, a contingent of bishop chairmen from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), including our Maryland conference chairman Archbishop Lori of the Archdiocese of Baltimore, called the United States Congress to action on gun violence. Therein, the bishops stated “There is something deeply wrong with a culture where these acts of violence are increasingly common. There must be dialogue followed by concrete action to bring about a broader social renewal that addresses all aspects of the crisis, including mental health, the state of families, the valuation of life, the influence of entertainment and gaming industries, bullying, and the availability of firearms. Among the many steps toward addressing this endemic of violence is the passage of reasonable gun control measures.”

The Conference supports this legislation an important step in the right direction toward curbing gun violence in our state. Reflective of the bishop’s statement above, this legislation mandates a “public health” approach to gun violence prevention and will promote the necessary study, deliberation, and conversations for the state to formulate best practices regarding gun violence.

The Conference supports holistic, restorative policies that propose commonsense limitations on access to lethal weapons that endanger entire communities. When community members are not in fear of their lives, they can live up to their God-given potential and enrich the world around them. Every person has a right to life, and the Conference will continue to work to

combat violence and promote a culture of peace. Banning dangerous and lethal weapons such as untraceable firearms is a manageable and efficient way to curb the rising culture of violence. It is for these reasons that we request a favorable report on Senate Bill 475.

SB 475 -SUPP - FIN - Feb 29 - Crenter for Preventi

Uploaded by: Henry Bogdan

Position: FAV



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Phone: 410 - 727 - 6367 | 800 - 273 - 6367 | Fax: 410 - 235 - 2190

February 29, 2024

Testimony on Senate Bill 475
Center for Firearm Violence Prevention - Establishment
Senate Finance Committee

Position: Favorable

Maryland Nonprofits is a statewide association of almost 2000 nonprofit organizations and institutions, with members in every county in the state. We strongly urge you to support Senate Bill 475, creating the Center for Firearm Prevention and Intervention within the Maryland Department of Health.

Gun violence is creating a public health crisis, as well as ravaging the safety and diminishing the quality of life in Maryland, particularly in communities of color. The proposed Center will be positioned to foster engagement with a diverse array of stakeholders. This includes active partnerships with the public health community, law enforcement agencies, community-based groups, county, and local agencies, as well as non-governmental gun violence prevention organizations. By unifying these efforts, the Center aims to comprehensively address gun violence in its various forms across the state, and it marks a pivotal shift towards a comprehensive, public health-centered strategy to tackle this crisis throughout the state.

Creation of a state-level office is a proactive step that will enable more rapid and effective coordination of resources. It will also play a crucial role in identifying communities that require focused, strategic services to prevent, rather than merely address, gun violence.

We strongly urge you to give Senate Bill 475 a favorable report.



30 YEARS STRENGTHENING ORGANIZATIONS FOR GREATER QUALITY OF LIFE AND EQUITY



SB 475 - FIN- MDH -LOS.pdf

Uploaded by: Jason Caplan

Position: FAV



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

February 29, 2024

The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

RE: Senate Bill 475 - Center for Firearm Violence Prevention- Establishment

Dear Chair Beidle and Committee members:

The Maryland Department of Health (Department) respectfully submits this letter of support for Senate Bill (SB) 475, which establishes the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention in the Department. The mission of the Center shall be to reduce firearm violence, harm from firearm violence, and misuse of firearms in Maryland by partnering with federal, state, and local agencies and affected communities to implement a public health approach to violence reduction.

The establishment of the Center advances Governor Moore's mission to make Maryland a State that is safe and the State Plan priority of creating safer communities. The center builds upon the violence prevention strategy and work of the Department and will complement the work of the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy and other State agencies. The Department's strategy, and the work of the Center, focuses on applying a public health framework to interventions across the lifespan, understanding that interventions can work upstream, especially for impacting the risk of youth violence.

The current work of the Department addresses victims of violence on a continuum, in real time through post recovery, including the long-term effects of trauma. The current strategy works across the administrations of the Department; the establishment of the Center will enhance the current work to not only focus it but leverage other state agencies to assist in data collection efforts.

The Department strongly supports SB 475. The establishment of the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention will not only focus current strategy at the Department but will allow for coordinated cross agency and office collaboration.

If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Sarah Case-Herron, Director of Governmental Affairs at sarah.case-herron@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H.
Secretary

SB 475 - GBC.pdf

Uploaded by: Jeffrey Zuback

Position: FAV



POSITION STATEMENT

Testimony to the Finance Committee

Senate Bill 0475/HB 0583 – Center for Firearm Violence Prevention - Establishment

Sponsors: Senate President Bill Ferguson and Speaker Adrienne Jones

February 28, 2024

JEFFREY ZUBACK

PUBLIC SAFETY DATA OFFICER

GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE

Position: Support

The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) supports Senate Bill SB0475/HB 0583, which establishes the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention in the Maryland Department of Health and will partner with various federal, state, and local agencies and affected communities to implement a public health approach to reducing gun violence in the State of Maryland.

The State of Maryland has routinely ranked in the top 10 in highest gun homicide rates in the country. Despite a historic reduction in gun violence in 2023, Baltimore City's 2023 murder rate (47.2 per 100,000) ranks 2nd highest among U.S. cities with a population of 500,000 or more. Reducing gun violence is a complex issue and utilizing a public health approach will identify the root causes of gun violence so that appropriate and effective strategies can be implemented. Furthermore, the data sharing component of this bill is crucial to understanding what is driving gun violence in the state.

As part of its multi-year agenda, the GBC is leveraging the resources of the business community to support an all-hands on deck approach to addressing gun violence, including partnering with the many local, state, and federal agencies that would also be working in conjunction with the Center. For these reasons, the GBC supports not just the passing of the bill but will also be an active partner in supporting the work of the Center. Thank you.

The Greater Baltimore Committee (GBC) is the leading voice for the private sector in the Baltimore region, providing insightful economic and civic leadership to drive collective impact. Composed of more than 400 organizations, including large, mid-size, and small companies, nonprofits, foundations, and educational and healthcare institutions, the GBC is dedicated to fostering the prosperity of the Greater Baltimore region.

GREATER BALTIMORE COMMITTEE

111 South Calvert Street • Suite 1700 • Baltimore, Maryland • 21202-6180

(410) 727-2820 • www.gbc.org

2024 SUPPORT Senate Bill 475_Center GVP_FINAL_PDF.

Uploaded by: Jenifer Pauliukonis

Position: FAV

SB 475
Favorable

TO: The Honorable Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Klausmeier, and Members of the Committee
Maryland Senate Finance Committee

FROM: Jen Pauliukonis, MPH
Director of Policy and Programming, Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions

DATE: February 29, 2024

RE: Senate Bill 475: Establishment of the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention

Johns Hopkins University and Medicine urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 475 – Establishment of the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention and Intervention. The office will be created within the Maryland Department of Health and will take a public health approach to preventing gun violence.

As the Director of Policy and Programming for the Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions, I am very happy to support this legislation. Our Center conducts and translates rigorous research to inform effective policy solutions, and develops, advocates for, and defends equitable and innovative policies and programs to end the epidemic of gun violence. The new office will align well with the work of the Center for Gun Violence Solutions.

I want to first differentiate between my own organization and the program described in the bill, the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention and Intervention. Our university-based organization is a part of the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and employs expert faculty and staff to study the impacts of gun violence prevention and develop and strengthen policy solutions both at the federal and state level. The Center for Firearm Violence Prevention established in House Bill 583 within the Maryland Department of Health will serve as a hub between a variety of federal, state, and local agencies to ensure Maryland's firearm-related laws are fully implemented and life-saving community violence intervention programs are funded and evaluated.

Currently, 8 states and the District of Columbia, as well as dozens of counties and municipalities, have offices of gun violence prevention. These offices build the infrastructure to effectively address the crisis of gun violence in a comprehensive manner, including by supporting community-based organizations saving lives on the ground.

The Center for Firearm Violence Prevention and Intervention in Senate Bill 475 seeks to utilize the public health approach to reduce gun deaths and injuries across the state of Maryland. Using public health to address violence and injury requires using evidence and data to understand what causes violence and develop evidence-informed solutions. The Center for Firearm Violence Prevention and

Intervention will:

- Acquire data and statistics and collaborate with research institutions for analysis to improve laws and programs;
- Facilitate coordination between federal agencies and a variety of state agencies, such as the Maryland Health Department, the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention, victim Services, local and county municipalities, and law enforcement;
- Provide technical assistance and model processes for community violence intervention programs in impacted communities;
- Create public awareness campaigns;
- Leverage federal and state resources to strengthen grant programs for a variety of violence reduction programs and crisis intervention; and
- Collaborate with communities most impacted by gun violence.

While many of the state-level offices of gun violence prevention are new and there is limited research on their effectiveness, one promising example is the Safe and Successful Youth Initiative (SSYI) created within the Massachusetts's governor's office in 2011. While the full scope of the initiative is more narrowly focused on evidence-informed youth and community violence intervention programs, it serves as a collaborative between the governor's office, local law enforcement, and youth violence reduction programs. The SSYI works to funnel key state and federal funding to these intervention programs and develop ongoing process and impact evaluations to ensure accountability. The SSYI conducted a multi-year comprehensive evaluation published in 2020. The researchers compared the cities that were a part of the SSYI program to other cities outside the program and found fewer rates of violent crime among youth aged 14-24 years of age and saved the state over \$32 million annually in violent crime victimization costsⁱ. The evaluation was so successful, that the original 11 cities within the program has now been expanded to 14. The vision for Maryland's Center for Firearm Violence Prevention and Intervention is even more bold and comprehensive than the Massachusetts example.

Johns Hopkins University and our Center fully support the comprehensive and holistic scope of Senate Bill 475, which will address all types of gun violence in Maryland including firearm suicide, domestic violence, community violence, and mass violence. By using a public health lens for the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention and Intervention, system actors will be able to fully understand the size and scope of the gun violence epidemic, which factors most put our communities at risk, and which laws and programs are most effective at keeping our communities safe. Maryland has enacted an array of evidence-informed gun laws, such as extreme risk protective orders, handgun purchaser licensing, and child access prevention laws. The creation of the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention and Intervention will strengthen the collaboration and enforcement of the laws currently on the books, thus increasing the impacts of those laws and saving lives. It will also ensure that key data is shared between different agencies and reduce duplicative work being conducted on the issues of gun violence prevention to improve results and save crucial resources in the efforts to reduce gun violence.

Accordingly, Johns Hopkins respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE** committee report on **Senate Bill 475**.

ⁱ The Massachusetts Safe and Successful Youth Initiative: A Promising Statewide Approach to Youth Gun and Gang Violence in the Fall 2020 issue of *Translational Criminology* (p 7-9).

SB 475, FAV, FCG OCE, LS24.pdf

Uploaded by: Jessica Fitzwater

Position: FAV



FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT
OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Jessica Fitzwater
County Executive

SB 475 – Center for Firearm Violence Prevention - Establishment

DATE: February 29, 2024
COMMITTEE: Senate Finance Committee
POSITION: Favorable
FROM: The Office of Frederick County Executive Jessica Fitzwater

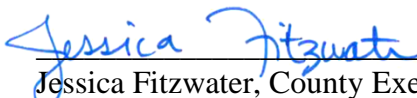
As the County Executive of Frederick County, I urge the committee to give SB 475 – Center for Firearm Violence Prevention - Establishment a favorable report.

This bill will establish the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention to reduce firearm violence, harm from firearm violence, and misuse of firearms in the State.

The creation of a statewide Center for Firearm Violence Prevention is the first step in implementing a whole-of-government approach to reducing gun violence in Maryland. The Center, housed in the Department of Health, will work with Federal, State, and local agencies to promote the development of evidence-based firearm violence prevention initiatives in affected communities. By working with these agencies, the Center will have the ability to ensure no community is left behind and efforts are focused in areas that have been disproportionately impacted by the firearm violence crisis.

SB 475 is vital to ensuring the reduction in firearm violence and harm to Maryland's children. The established Center will be charged with working with government and non-government stakeholders in communities to create a plan to reduce firearm violence through data collection, information sharing, and research. This is essential in ensuring that all aspects of this crisis are evaluated, and a meaningful plan may be crafted by the Center. This bill, and the work conducted by the Center, carry the potential to make Maryland a leader in firearm violence prevention.

As a mother of two, a 17-year educator, and now the County Executive of the fastest growing school district in Maryland, making our community safer from gun violence is a top priority for me. Thank you for your consideration of SB 475. I urge you to advance this bill with a favorable report.



Jessica Fitzwater, County Executive
Frederick County, MD

Center Testimony (SB475_HB583) 2024 - Senate.pdf

Uploaded by: Karen Herren

Position: FAV



marylanders
to prevent
gun violence



Testimony in **Support** of
Center for Firearm Violence Prevention - Establishment
SB 475/HB 583

Karen Herren, Executive Director of Marylanders to Prevent Gun Violence and Co-lead of the
Maryland Violence Prevention Coalition

Tarria Stanley, Northeast Regional Advocacy Manager, Community Justice and Co-lead of the
Maryland Violence Prevention Coalition

February 29, 2024

Dear Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Klausmeier, and distinguished members of the Committee,

On behalf of Marylanders to Prevent Gun Violence (MPGV), Community Justice, and the Maryland Violence Prevention Coalition (MVPC), we are writing in support of **SB475/HB 583** for the establishment of a Center for Firearm Violence Prevention and Intervention within the Maryland Department of Health.

As advocates and organizations deeply committed to reducing violence and improving living conditions across our state, we believe that urgent action is needed to address the crisis of gun violence through a comprehensive public health approach.

Maryland, despite its relatively strong gun safety laws, continues to experience a devastating toll of gun violence. On average, 796 lives are lost and 1,363 individuals are wounded by firearms in our state each year. In 2021 that number skyrocketed to more than 900. The impact of this violence is felt across our communities, exacerbating existing disparities and perpetuating cycles of fear and trauma. While law enforcement undoubtedly plays a critical role in addressing gun violence, we must adopt a broader perspective to proactively prevent such incidents and tackle their underlying causes.

A public health approach offers an effective and sustainable path forward. By prioritizing prevention, intervention, and community engagement, we can disrupt the cycles of violence and create safer, healthier communities for all Marylanders. The proposed Center for Firearm Violence Prevention and Intervention would serve as a vital resource for coordinating efforts between federal, state, and local agencies, facilitating data collection and research, and developing best practices for community violence intervention programs.

Through our coalition's collaborative efforts, we have seen the power of evidence-based strategies to reduce gun violence. Programs such as street outreach, gun violence reduction strategies, safe



storage campaigns, and hospital-based violence intervention programs have demonstrated promising results in communities across the country. By investing in these proven approaches and increasing resources for community-based programs, we can make meaningful progress toward reducing gun violence in Maryland. Establishing a Center for Firearm Violence Prevention and Intervention represents a critical step toward building a more equitable and functional infrastructure for violence prevention in our state.

Following this testimony are two attachments. **Attachment A** is a list of coalition partners signing onto this testimony. **Attachment B** is a White Paper prepared by the coalition last year articulating and analyzing the approach to and recommendations for this public health approach to gun violence. We urge a **FAVORABLE** report on **SB475** to establish a Center for Firearm Violence Prevention and Intervention within the Maryland Department of Health. By embracing a public health approach and investing in community-driven solutions, we can create a safer and more just Maryland for generations to come.

###

***Marylanders to Prevent Gun Violence** is a statewide program, education, and advocacy organization dedicated to reducing gun deaths and injuries in Maryland. In addition to our advocacy work, we run a grief support program for impacted elementary-aged children in Baltimore, educate them on gun safety and gun laws, and co-lead the Maryland Violence Prevention Coalition.*

***Community Justice** is a Black and Brown, survivor-led national organization that focuses on empowering communities closest to the pain inflicted by gun violence. We see gun violence as a public health crisis, and we are advocating for a public health approach that centers communities directly impacted by this crisis and implements evidence-informed strategies to intervene and prevent violence.*

*The **Maryland Violence Prevention Coalition** is a program co-chaired by Marylanders to Prevent Gun Violence and Community Justice. We seek to elevate the work of groups working on the ground in communities and across Maryland to prevent, interrupt, and address violence. MVPC is currently composed of over 80 community members including activists, social service providers, healthcare practitioners, survivors of gun violence, policy advocates, concerned citizens, violence prevention practitioners, researchers, law enforcement, community violence interrupters, and scholars.*

*Karen Herren
Executive Director, Marylanders to Prevent Gun Violence*

*Tarria Stanley
Northeast Regional Advocacy Manager, Community Justice*



ATTACHMENT A

Below is a list of member signatories from individuals and organizations comprising the Maryland Violence Prevention Coalition. These dedicated individuals and groups stand united in our collective pursuit of safer communities and the prevention of gun violence. Their support underscores the urgent need for legislative action and reaffirms our shared commitment to advancing public health solutions to gun violence in Maryland¹.

1. Karen Herren, Executive Director Marylanders to Prevent Gun Violence
2. Tarria Stanley, Northeast Regional Advocacy Manager, Community Justice
3. Kyle Fischer, MD, MPH, Policy Director, The Health Alliance for Violence Intervention
4. Phyllis Gray, Assistant VP of Care Transformation, MedStar Health
5. Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence
6. Coren Eve Makell, an African American Annapolitan
7. Lydia C. Watts, Executive Director, Rebuild, Overcome, and Rise (ROAR) at the University of Maryland, Baltimore
8. Enough of Gun Violence
9. Nadine Finigan-Carr, Executive Director of the UMB Center for Violence Prevention
10. Woodie Kessel, MD, MPH; Assistant Surgeon General, USPHS, (Ret); Co-Director, University of Maryland Prevent Gun Violence: Research, Empowerment, Strategies and Solutions (UMD PROGRESS Initiative)
11. Critical Issues Forum (CIF)
12. Heather Warnken, Executive Director, Center for Criminal Justice Reform, University of Baltimore School of Law
13. Center for Criminal Justice Reform, University of Baltimore School of Law
14. March for Our Lives
15. Dante' Johnson, Director of Community Safety Initiatives, Living Classrooms Foundation
16. Brady United, Montgomery County, MD Chapter
17. Lifebridge Health, Center for Hope
18. Lifebridge Health
19. Shantay Jackson, Violence Reduction Project Manager, Former Executive Director of Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement, Baltimore City
20. Dr. Joseph B. Richardson, Co-Director, University of Maryland Prevent Gun Violence: Research, Empowerment, Strategies and Solutions (UMD PROGRESS Initiative)
21. Advance Maryland

¹ Not all of our member participants possess the organizational authority to publicly endorse legislation, even if they have actively contributed to our collective efforts toward a cause such as in this case. The Coalition only signs on as a collective when the underlying effort is broadly endorsed by all members. We currently have over 80 active members from around the state.



22. Dr. Lucas C. Carlson, MD, MPH, Regional Medical Director, Care Transformation - MedStar Health
23. Reverend Greta Willis, Baltimore Youth Grief Support Program Director, Marylanders to Prevent Gun Violence, Founder of the Kevin L. Cooper Foundation
24. Kathy Wagner-Kosmakos, R.N., M.S.N., Program Director for the Department of Care Coordination and Clinical Resource Management, Johns Hopkins Hospital
25. City of Annapolis, NO HARM VIPP
26. Roca
27. Giffords
28. Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence
29. R Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center

ATTACHMENT B

2023 Action Plan Gun Violence in our Communities

A Public Health Problem. A Public Health Approach.

Maryland is ahead of the curve on many public health measures. Unfortunately, it is woefully behind on preventing and meaningfully addressing gun violence. This is despite the fact that Maryland’s gun safety laws are strong compared to many other states. Across Maryland, 796 people die from gun violence and another 1,363 are wounded each year. Gun violence has increased 39 percent nationwide since 2012, yet the increase in Maryland has been 54 percent. We have the ninth-highest rate of gun homicides in the nation.²

This violence is affecting the health and well-being of every community from Western Maryland to the Eastern Shore. Communities hardest hit by unrelenting violence, including many low-income, Black and Brown communities, have suffered from decades of disinvestment. Baltimore City’s gun homicide rate is a stunning 44.17³ per 100,000 people, compared to 8.9⁴ statewide. This wide discrepancy mirrors the differences in gun violence in other U.S. cities. Those cities with the highest rates of gun violence have higher proportions of residents living in poverty, higher rates of unemployment, and are generally more racially segregated than other cities.⁵

What does this mean for Maryland? Our communities are afraid. Children are afraid to go to school. Adults are afraid to go to work or even the grocery store. People are afraid to live their everyday lives. The result is a cycle of violence and fear that is escalating.

Gun Violence is Eroding Our Health and Our Lives.

The impact of gun violence on Marylanders is profound. Violence, as well as the fear of violence, is taking a huge toll on the quality of our lives.

- More than 120,000 Americans are killed or injured by guns every year in this country.
- 75 percent of young people between ages 15 and 21 say that mass shootings are a significant source of stress.⁶
- Gun violence costs Maryland \$10.5 billion per year; \$383.9 million of this is paid by taxpayers – about \$1,731 per resident.⁷

Maryland Needs a Public Health Approach to Gun Violence.

Maryland needs a public health approach to reduce gun violence in our communities. In its recent *New York Rifle & Pistol Ass’n v. Bruen*⁸ ruling, the U.S. Supreme Court limited states’ ability to place legal guardrails around gun ownership. While the exact number of guns in circulation in the U.S. is hard to

² [EveryStat](#)

³ <https://bigcitieshealthdata.org/compare/?city=2&cities=3&metrics=11-01-03&years=&groups=&sort=name&geoStata=>

⁴ [EveryStat](#)

⁵ [Gun Deaths in Big Cities | Urban Health Collaborative | Drexel University](#)

⁶ [What Gun Violence Does to Our Mental Health - The New York Times](#)

⁷ These costs include healthcare, law enforcement and criminal justice related, and costs to employers and lost income. See <https://everystat.org/#Maryland>

⁸ https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/21pdf/20-843_7j80.pdf



ascertain, we know that the number of guns produced each year has increased steadily over time. While gun ownership rates have remained consistent over time,⁹ gun manufacturing rates have risen steadily.¹⁰ A conservative estimation concludes that there are currently around 352 million guns in circulation in this country.¹¹

How can policymakers address the violence that results from the large number of guns in our society? It is clear from the news and the lived experience of countless Marylanders that a continued overreliance on police, prosecution, and prisons is not working. Law enforcement is mostly limited to responding to gun violence *after it occurs*. This cannot be the crux of our strategy to prevent gun violence. We need to find better ways.

Public health is about prevention. And the peer-reviewed research is clear. We can lower gun violence with evidence-based strategies that prevent and disrupt the cycles. This paper describes the types of programs that may be included in a public health approach to gun violence and then lays out what needs to happen in Maryland to most effectively make use of these strategies.

There are Successful Public Health Gun Violence Prevention Programs.

Below we describe a few examples of the many programs that employ a public health approach to addressing gun violence. These programs apply public health principles to interrupt the spread of violence based on the concept that violent behaviors are transmitted in ways that are similar to the spread of infectious diseases. With infectious diseases, the more relationships a person has with sick people, the more likely they are to be infected. The longer it has been since exposure, the less likely infection becomes. Violence operates in very similar ways. By weaving together demographic risks such as age, sex, and neighborhood with time since violence exposure, we can think about how we might make changes to interrupt violence.

Street Outreach

Street outreach programs interrupt cycles of violent conflict using credible messengers who act as mediators to prevent shootings, provide real-time crisis response, and connect high-risk people with long-term support to promote behavior change. Street outreach programs have been rigorously evaluated by numerous independent think tanks, with strong, statistically significant outcomes observed in most analyses. Reductions in shootings have ranged from 40 to 70 percent, with some cities even able to maintain multiple years without any shootings at all. Analyses have also shown that anywhere from \$3,500-\$4,500 is saved for every act of violence stopped. Apart from these tangible results, supplementary benefits in the form of increased employment rates and more faith in law enforcement personnel are also realized.¹²

- Some of the hardest-hit communities in the U.S., Latin America, and the Caribbean have reduced shootings and killings by 40-70 percent by using street outreach strategies. In some instances,

⁹ [What Percentage of Americans Own Guns?](#) 32% of U.S. adults say they personally own a gun and 44% report living in a gun household.

¹⁰ “American gunmakers produced more than 9 million guns a year on average between 2016 and 2020 and U.S. entities imported another almost 5 million firearms annually on average. By 2020, 11 million guns were being produced annually and another 6.8 million imported.” [How Many Guns Are Circulating in the U.S.?](#) <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/e/2PACX-1vShiwPP36HrjUyPztuIhoYjR3Xd3uhlQivMC3wPSNq1UCjVbj2wsPZIIISqOtFO0NbVVwwKBzyrDNuCz/pubhtml#>

¹¹ [How Many Guns Are Circulating in the U.S.?](#)

¹² [Publications – NICJR](#) and [Estimating the Effects of Safe Streets Baltimore on Gun Violence](#)

shootings and killings have plummeted by 90 percent and have almost eliminated retaliatory violence in some communities. Several previously highly violent neighborhoods have had months-long streaks with no homicides or shootings.

- In 2017, an evaluation by the John Jay College of Criminal Justice recorded a 63 percent decrease in shootings within New York’s South Bronx district. In 2020, ICESI University, in Cali, Colombia, found that killings in Cali’s Charco Azul community declined by 47 percent. In over a dozen other cities, studies have shown a downward trend in violent behavior, primarily associated with street outreach intervention.¹³

Gun Violence Reduction Strategies (GVRS)

GVRS, sometimes referred to as “focused deterrence” or “group violence intervention” works as a partnership between law enforcement and communities to intervene with individuals at the highest risk of committing acts of violence. This strategy pairs community leaders and law enforcement with high-risk individuals employing a “carrots and sticks” approach. Participants are warned of swift criminal sanctions for violent behaviors while simultaneously being offered tangible benefits for those who engage in peace such as job training, drug treatment, and other social services.

- Oakland’s GVRS, which was launched at the end of 2012, resulted in six consecutive years of reductions in shootings and homicides, culminating in a 49 percent reduction in fatal and non-fatal shootings. Toward the end of March 2020, before COVID-19 shelter-in-place restrictions were imposed, homicides were down by 38 percent year-to-date from 2019. Had Oakland maintained that low rate, it would have achieved the lowest murder rate in the city’s history. But like nearly every city in the country, Oakland experienced a spike in shootings and homicides once the COVID-19 restrictions caused outreach and services to cease operation.¹⁴ More recently, positive results in Baltimore’s Western District led to GVRS launching in the Southwestern District.¹⁵

Hospital-Based Violence Intervention Programs (HVIPs)

HVIPs are programs that reach individuals immediately after they have been injured and continue their care beyond hospital discharge. HVIPs accomplish this with violence prevention professionals, a form of credible messenger who receive additional training to work within health systems. They meet with the patient at the bedside following injury and initiate a long-term care relationship to decrease risk factors for violence while bolstering protective factors. This typically requires addressing a wide range of needs ranging from mental health services to jobs, housing, and education.

- Caught in the Crossfire is an HVIP program based in Oakland, CA, and was among the first HVIPs in the country. Its intervention specialists connect with injured youth at Oakland’s Highland Hospital. An evaluation conducted in 2004 found that the program reduced the probability of re-arrest six months after injury by 70 percent.
- Baltimore’s Shock Trauma’s Violence Intervention Program (VIP) showed in a randomized control trial that the program lowered the risk of repeat violent injury from 36 to 5 percent. It also decreased the risk that participants would be incarcerated in the future, resulting in significant

¹³ [Multiple Studies: Cure Violence Works](#)

¹⁴ [Publications – NICJR](#) and [Oakland’s Successful Gun Violence Reduction Strategy](#)

¹⁵ [What caused a 33% drop in gun violence in West Baltimore last year? We analyzed it](#) and [BPD releases Year 4 Review of Crime Reduction & Departmental Transformational Plan | Baltimore Police Department](#)



financial savings.¹⁶ With violence being the leading cause of death for youth in Baltimore, the VIP program uses risk factors to pinpoint patients who fit the intervention criteria. This evaluation illustrates that individuals involved in the program had lower rates of re-arrest, conviction, and subsequent incarceration. VIP has been a cost-effective intervention with positive outcomes.¹⁷

Offices of Neighborhood Safety

Offices of neighborhood safety are local offices that generally take a holistic approach to neighborhood health and safety. These offices empower community partners and city agencies to play a more active role in the co-production of public safety and prevention of violence through a trauma-responsive, healing-centered, and equity-based approach for the benefit of all community members. Examples include the Mayor’s Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement in Baltimore, the Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement in Washington, DC, and the Office of Neighborhood Safety in Richmond, California (ONS).

- Since the establishment of ONS, Richmond has experienced a substantial decrease in violence, with firearm-related homicides declining by more than 70 percent. With respect to those individuals enrolled in the Peacemaker Fellowship program within ONS, 77 percent have not been involved in any gun violence activity.¹⁸

**Maryland Has a Pathway to Reduce Gun Violence.
Next Steps on a Public Health Approach**

Maryland has a long history of using public health strategies to address nearly intractable problems. For example, Maryland embarked on a comprehensive public campaign to lower tobacco use with the establishment of the Cigarette Restitution Fund in 2000. As a result, the number of deaths from tobacco use dropped more than 10 percent from 201.4 per 100,000 to 180.4 between 2002 and 2008.¹⁹

Successful public health campaigns have similar core elements. We already have some of that infrastructure in Maryland. We just need to build out our public health capacity to support our communities to effectuate change.

To support Maryland’s efforts, the Maryland Violence Prevention Coalition (the Coalition) convened our stakeholders to develop recommendations for Governor Moore’s Administration for 2023-2024. The Coalition is pleased to have a partner who is committed to improving the lives of all Marylanders by reducing gun violence.

The Coalition’s recommendations for 2023-2024 are:

¹⁶Cooper, C., Eslinger, D. M., & Stolley, P. D. (2006). Hospital-Based Violence Intervention Programs Work: The Journal of Trauma: Injury, Infection, and Critical Care, 61(3), 534–540.

<https://doi.org/10.1097/01.ta.0000236576.81860.8c>

¹⁷ [Publications – NICJR](#) and [Research on the Effects of Hospital-Based Violence Intervention Programs: Observations and Recommendations - Daniel W. Webster, Joseph Richardson, Nicholas Meyerson, Christopher Vil, Rachel Topazian, 2022](#); A study on risk factors for repeat violent injury among Black men in Baltimore found that a history of incarceration is the most significant risk factor for repeat injury. We cannot underestimate the impact of mass incarceration on gun violence.

¹⁸ [Publications – NICJR](#)

¹⁹ [maryland department of health & mental hygiene cigarette restitution fund program fiscal year 2010 annual report](#)

- **Establish a State Office of Violence Intervention and Prevention:** Gun violence is a complex problem that requires a coordinated approach across people, organizations, and agencies. The Coalition recommends the establishment of the State Office of Violence Intervention and Prevention under the Department of Health. The Office would coordinate efforts with other key State and local agencies, educate the public on gun violence-related issues, conduct and/or collaborate on data collection and research, administer grants, leverage and coordinate relevant grant funding administration, and engage stakeholders. Seven states already have similar offices, including California, New York, Illinois, Colorado, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Washington. Many of these states have invested significant resources into these efforts.
- **Perform a Public Health Needs Assessment:** The Coalition recommends that through the new Office of Violence Intervention and Prevention, the Department of Health conduct a systematic assessment of existing resources and the need for additional infrastructure to support violence intervention and prevention programs.
- **Increase Resources for Community-Based Programs:** The Coalition recommends the State immediately invest at least another \$3 million in additional resources to support effective community-based violence intervention, victim services, and collaborating hospital-based programming. Maryland has a start with the \$3 million allocated annually to MD VIPP. However, this level of funding is not commensurate with the scale of the problem. Many states have invested considerably more. For example, Minnesota, which does not have nearly the scale of the problem Maryland has, recently committed \$70 million over two years. Illinois has committed a \$250 million state investment to implement evidence-based violence prevention strategies.²⁰ While Maryland builds the needed infrastructure to effectively administer these funds, we must start bringing the amount of funding dedicated to this work in line with the critical need that exists.

The Maryland Violence Prevention Coalition is a coalition of organizations with a joint mission of reducing violence and improving living conditions across Maryland. Using a community-led approach, the Coalition seeks to empower the voices often neglected and educate elected officials and the public about urgent community needs. The coalition is co-chaired by Marylanders to Prevent Gun Violence (MPGV) and the Community Justice Action Fund (CJAF) and seeks to elevate the efforts of groups working on the ground in Baltimore and across Maryland to prevent and interrupt violence. The Coalition is composed of more than 50 community members including activists, social service providers, health care practitioners, survivors of gun violence, policy advocates, legislators, concerned citizens, violence prevention practitioners, researchers, and scholars.

²⁰ <https://ovpnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/OVP-Report050923.pdf>

NASW Maryland - 2024 SB 475 FAV - Firearm Violence

Uploaded by: Karessa Proctor

Position: FAV

**Senate Finance Committee
February 29, 2024**

Senate Bill 475: Center for Firearm Violence Prevention – Establishment

*****SUPPORT*****

The National Association of Social Workers – Maryland Chapter, an organization representing social workers statewide, is asking for your support for Senate Bill 475 - Center for Firearm Violence Prevention - Establishment.

NASW Maryland supports the creation of the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention to better enable Maryland to address firearm violence through data collection and the dissemination and implementation of evidence-based strategies to identify the root causes of firearm suicides, homicides, and injuries. Among the things that will help this effort is the use of data to identify both risk and protective factors. This use of predictive analytics can help lead the State to more effective policies that will reduce the incidents of death and injury.

Upstream prevention is worth a great deal of investment. We urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 475.

Respectfully,

Karessa Proctor, BSW, MSW
Executive Director, NASW-MD

Support - SB 475 - Center for Firearm Violence Pre

Uploaded by: Ken Shilling

Position: FAV



Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

Testimony in Support of - SB 475- Center for Firearm Violence Prevention - Establishment

TO: Senator William Smith, Chair and
Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee
FROM: Ken Shilling, Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland
Gun Violence Prevention Lead Advocate
DATE: February 29, 2024

In my faith tradition, I know that my conscience will not be quieted by anything less than truth and justice. Gun violence is a public health epidemic in this country that extracts a financial burden of \$10.5 billion annually on Maryland alone.

Even though Maryland is 8th in the country for legislation on gun violence prevention, we are still average with regard to the number of deaths from gun violence. Unfortunately, even when we do things like ban “bump stocks” or “automatic weapons,” manufacturers can bypass the intent of our gun law by designing new parts that are not banned. In state buy-back programs, companies can destroy the parts with serial numbers, and resell the remaining parts as a “ghost gun kit,” which we banned in 2022.

Therefore, we must enhance the effectiveness of the enforcement of our laws. We need a state-wide solution; one that will facilitate data collection and research to provide impactful solutions.

SB 475 provides for the establishment of the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention in the Maryland Department of Health. It will implement a holistic public health approach to firearm violence reduction.

SB 475 will foster collaboration between law enforcement and community-based programs. The new Center will develop best practices for scaling community intervention programs. It will educate the public on issues that can prevent gun violence.

We all have a moral duty to provide for public safety. Let us act together in Love. We urge a favorable report on SB 475.

Ken Shilling

UULM-MD Gun Violence Prevention Lead Advocate

SB475 HAVI Letter of Support.pdf

Uploaded by: Kyle Fischer

Position: FAV



Maryland General Assembly- Senate Finance Committee
3 East
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Letter of support for SB 475 Center for Firearm Violence Prevention – Establishment

February 28, 2024

Chair Beidle and the Senate Finance Committee,

The Health Alliance for Violence Intervention (HAVI) is pleased to support SB 475 “Center for Firearm Violence Prevention – Establishment.” This bill would create an office within the Department of Health to craft a coordinated response to firearm violence across the state. We respectfully ask that your committee provide a favorable report for this important legislation.

The HAVI represents a national network of hospital-based violence intervention programs (HVIPS). HVIPS are victim service providers that use patient-focused strategies to break the cycle of violence and reduce rates of repeat injury. Founded in 2009, the HAVI represents 50 programs across the United States. In fact, the R Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center Violence Intervention Program was one of our founding members, with UM Capital Region Health, Johns Hopkins Hospital, Lifebridge Health, Youth Advocate Programs, and the ROAR Center subsequently joining.

In recent years, the establishment of centers for firearm violence prevention has emerged as a best practice for the development of comprehensive strategies to end gun violence. These offices serve multiple important roles, including: developing an all-of-government plan to address the issue, coordinating work between disparate agencies such as justice, health, education, and housing, coordinating programmatic funding, and acting as trusted subject matter experts for all levels of government.

These offices elevate strategies that address community violence through a public health lens and broaden opportunities to be solution-oriented in addressing community violence, rather than reactive. They engage directly with the communities most impacted by violence, and help promote community-based solutions. By involving community members, policymakers at the local & state level, and community-based organizations, they shape interventions to support local needs. This collaborative approach ensures that solutions are trauma-informed, culturally competent, relevant, and sustainable.

The HAVI has had the privilege of working with similar offices throughout the country and have found them to be effective in both obvious and non-obvious ways. Below is a list of a few tangible examples from the last year:

- The HAVI received a message from the Governor's office of a midwestern state inquiring about a new policy they were considering adopting: covering violence prevention with Medicaid dollars. We were told directly that they learned of the policy option during a meeting with the White House Office of Gun Violence Prevention. This is a prime example of how a newly formed center in Maryland could provide best practices to cities and counties throughout the state who are looking for solutions to ending firearm violence, but could use assistance from a trusted voice.
- In California, the Office of Gun Violence Prevention has taken a central role in coordinating the implementation a bill to reimburse the work of frontline violence prevention professionals. Prior to their involvement, frontline violence intervention organizations faced significant challenges navigating state bureaucracies as the particular policy touched multiple state agencies, including the Department of Health Care Services, Department of Public Health, and Department of Justice. The Office of Gun Violence Prevention was able to assume a coordinating role between the three which led to significant progress in the implementation.
- In North Carolina, the newly established Office of Violence Prevention has already assumed a convening role. Its advisory board includes representatives from antiviolence organizations, physicians, law enforcement, and local government. By bringing a broad swath of perspectives to the table, they are beginning new cooperative strategies that previously would have been unlikely to occur.

We believe SB 475 is an important step to ensure public safety across Maryland. Given the devastating consequences of firearm violence in our state, it is critical that we create structures within the government to address the issue in a thoughtful manner. We believe that this bill does just that.

For these reasons, we ask that the Senate Finance Committee provide a favorable report on SB 475 Center for Firearm Violence Prevention – Establishment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kyle Fischer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kyle Fischer, MD, MPH
Policy Director
The Health Alliance for Violence Intervention (HAVI)
KyleF@TheHAVI.org

GunViolenceCenter.Testimony.Senate2.28.24.pdf

Uploaded by: Lydia Watts

Position: FAV

BILL NO: Senate Bill 475
TITLE: Establishment of the Center for Firearm Prevention
COMMITTEE: Finance Committee
HEARING DATE: February 29 at 1 pm
POSITION: **SUPPORT**

I am the Executive Director of The Rebuild, Overcome, and Rise (ROAR) Center at the University of Maryland, Baltimore, representing the interests of the over 750 crime victims from Baltimore City that ROAR has assisted since our inception in June 2019. ROAR is a “one-stop-shop” in Baltimore City where survivors of crime can access a full range of wraparound legal, mental health, case management and nurse care management services in one place, which research has shown provides the best outcomes for survivors who are often managing myriad and complex needs. ROAR aims to co-create with survivors a community in which people who experience crime or systemic injustice are empowered to achieve their own sense of justice, healing, and well-being. ROAR’s mission is to engage with individuals and communities in Baltimore City by providing holistic, client-driven services to survivors of crime and influencing efforts to reform systemic responses to crime. **ROAR urges the House Judiciary Committee to issue a favorable report on SB 475.**

At ROAR we assist victims of all types of crime, abuse, and harm who live or were harmed in Baltimore City, over 70% of whom are survivors of gun violence – family members of homicide victims and survivors of non-fatal gunshots. Hearing from survivors of gun violence, and recognizing how the issues of safety, life trajectory, and risk of being directly impacted by gun violence is deeply rooted in racism and poverty. That reality motivated me to apply for and enroll in the Bloomberg American Health Initiative (BAHI) at the Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health as a student in the Masters of Public Health program. My area of focus is violence – particularly gun violence – as a public health crisis. I started my fellowship in May 2020 and have now studied the vast majority of existing research that demonstrates what is successful in preventing and intervening in gun violence. I have also engaged in first-hand research projects under the tutelage of Dr. Joseph Richardson of the University of Maryland College Park, Departments of African American Studies and Medical Anthropology. As a co-principal investigator with Dr. Richardson, I have interviewed both male and female survivors of non-fatal gunshots from Baltimore City and I have heard first-hand from those research participants and the clients of ROAR that a coordinated, evidence-based approach is critical to reducing the intolerably high rates of gun violence that wrack communities – especially Black and Brown communities – across the State of Maryland. Creating this Center for Gun Violence Prevention within the state Department of Health is a critical piece of this effort.

For the above stated reasons, **ROAR urges a favorable report on SB 475.**

2024 Written Testimony in support of SB0475.pdf

Uploaded by: Lynn Mortoro

Position: FAV



**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB0475
Center for Firearm Violence Prevention-Establishment**

**Establishing the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention in the MD
Department of Health to reduce firearm violence, harm from firearm violence
and misuse of firearms in the State by partnering with federal, State and local
communities**

FAVORABLE

February 29, 2024

TO: Chair Senator Pamela Beidle, Senator Katherine Klausmeir and members of the Finance Committee.

FROM: Lynn Mortoro, member, Maryland Episcopal Public Policy Network,
Diocese of Maryland

DATE: February 29, 2024

Chair Senator Beidle, Senator Klausmeir and members of the Finance Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to write testimony in favor of SB0475.

I firmly believe that we must enact strong legislation that will truly protect all citizens from gun violence.

The only way to accomplish this is through education and strong legislation. We cannot continue to allow the injuries and killings to continue.

Episcopal Church positions support laws to enhance Firearm Prevention at all levels of government. This includes local, State and federal levels.

Working together by partnering to pass comprehensive legislation that will support purchaser licensing, background checks, restrictions on sale, ownership and use of firearms are all supported by the Episcopal Church.

Thank you

The Diocese of Maryland requests a Favorable report

SB 475_MNADV_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Melanie Shapiro

Position: FAV



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/>

For further information contact Melanie Shapiro ■ Public Policy Director ■ 301-852-3930 ■ mshapiro@mnadv.org

2024 ACNM SB 475 Senate Side.pdf

Uploaded by: Michael Paddy

Position: FAV



Committee: Senate Finance Committee

Bill Number: Senate Bill 475

Title: Center for Firearm Violence Prevention - Establishment

Hearing Date: February 29, 2024

Position: Support

The Maryland Affiliate of the American College of Nurse Midwives (ACNM) supports *Senate Bill 475 - Center for Firearm Violence Prevention - Establishment*. The bill will establish the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention in the Maryland Department of Health.

Certified nurse-midwives provide care for women who may be exposed to gun violence that puts them at risk for personal harm, destruction of the family structure, and loss of financial stability. Women in the U.S. who are pregnant or who have recently given birth are more likely to be murdered than to die from obstetric causes—and these homicides are linked to a deadly mix of intimate partner violence and firearms.ⁱ In recognition that firearm-related violence is a complex, multifaceted issue that significantly affects women’s health, ACNM supports efforts to continue research, promote policy change, and develop effective prevention strategies at individual, community, and national levels.

We ask for a favorable report on this legislation. If we can provide any further information, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net or (443) 926-3443.

ⁱ Homicide leading cause of death for pregnant women in U.S., October 21, 2022, <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/hsph-in-the-news/homicide-leading-cause-of-death-for-pregnant-women-in-u-s/>. Accessed February 10, 2024.

2024 MASBHC SB 475 Senate Side.pdf

Uploaded by: Michael Paddy

Position: FAV



Committee: Senate Finance Committee

Bill Number: SB 475

Title: Center for Firearm Violence Prevention - Establishment

Hearing Date: February 29, 2024

Position: Support

The Maryland Assembly on School-Based Health Centers (MASBHC) strongly supports *Senate Bill 475 - Center for Firearm Violence Prevention - Establishment*. The bill would establish the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention and Intervention under the Department of Health.

MASBHC is alarmed by the growing incidents of gun violence in our schools. Between 2018 and 2023, there were 44 people wounded or killed in 45 school shootings in Maryland.ⁱ Our organization represents the 90 school-based health centers across Maryland. Our members regularly express concern about the profound impact of the threat of gun violence on students.

This bill recognizes that firearm violence is a public health issue. The Maryland Department of Health will work with families, communities, schools, and local officials to design and implement evidence-based prevention and intervention strategies.

We ask for a favorable report. If we can provide any additional information, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net or (443) 926-3443.

ⁱ <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/articles/states-with-the-most-school-shootings>

2024 MCHS SB 475 Senate Side.pdf

Uploaded by: Michael Paddy

Position: FAV



Maryland Community Health System

Committee: Senate Finance Committee

Bill Number: SB 475

Title: Center for Firearm Violence Prevention - Establishment

Hearing Date: February 29, 2024

Position: Support

The Maryland Community Health System (MCHS) supports *Senate Bill 475 - Center for Firearm Violence Prevention - Establishment*. The bill establishes 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 by partnering with federal, State, and local agencies, and affected communities to implement a public health approach to firearm violence reduction.

MCHS is a network of seven federally qualified health centers with 55 care delivery sites across the state of Maryland. Our mission is to ensure underserved communities have access to somatic, behavioral, and oral health care. Social determinants of health and the cycle of gun violence are inextricably linked, with many of the communities we serve experiencing high rates of firearm-related injury and death and also being disproportionately impacted by other health issues. MCHS strongly supports working specifically with affected communities because, as with so many areas of public health, community input should inform the efforts and initiatives developed around gun violence prevention.

MCHS requests a favorable report on this bill. If we can provide any further information, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net.

2024 MNA SB 475 Senate Side.pdf

Uploaded by: Michael Paddy

Position: FAV



Committee: Senate Finance Committee

Bill Number: Senate Bill 475 – Center for Firearm Violence Prevention - Establishment

Hearing Date: February 29, 2024

Position: Support

The Maryland Nurses Association (MNA) supports *Senate Bill 475 – Center for Firearm Violence Prevention - Establishment*. The bill would establish the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention and Intervention under the Department of Health.

Acts of gun violence have continued to increase in both the community and health care settings. As frontline providers, nurses are directly and indirectly impacted by gun violence and witness first-hand the devastation and traumatic aftermath of gun violence for patients, families, and communities. This bill recognizes that firearm violence is a public health issue. The Maryland Department of Health will work with families, communities, schools, and local officials to design and implement evidence-based prevention and intervention strategies.

We urge a favorable report on this bill. If we can provide any further information, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net or (443) 926-3443.

2024 WLCM SB 475 Senate Side.pdf

Uploaded by: Michael Paddy

Position: FAV

Committee: Senate Finance Committee

Bill Number: SB 475

Title: Center for Firearm Violence Prevention - Establishment

Hearing Date: February 29, 2024

Position: Support

The Women's Law Center of Maryland (WLC) supports *Senate Bill 475 - Center for Firearm Violence Prevention - Establishment*. The bill would establish the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention and Intervention under the Department of Health. The WLC supports Governor Moore's public health approach for addressing the issue of gun violence in our communities.

As part of our mission, WLC provides legal services to survivors of intimate partner violence. Victims and survivors of intimate partner violence are at a heightened risk for death or injury due to gun violence. Firearms are involved in more than half of intimate partner homicides, and individuals facing intimate partner violence are five times more likely to be killed when their partner has access to a gun.ⁱ We support the integrated approach in SB 475 of working with families, communities, and local officials in designing prevention and intervention strategies that are evidence-based.

We ask for a favorable report. If we can provide any further information, please contact Robyn Elliott at relliott@policypartners.net or (443) 926-3443.

ⁱ Tobin-Tyler E. Intimate Partner Violence, Firearm Injuries and Homicides: A Health Justice Approach to Two Intersecting Public Health Crises. *J Law Med Ethics*. 2023;51(1):64-76. doi: 10.1017/jme.2023.41. Epub 2023 May 25. PMID: 37226755; PMCID: PMC10209983.

Center for Violence VPI - Favorable.docx (2).pdf

Uploaded by: Myles Hicks

Position: FAV

*STATE OF MARYLAND
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR*



*WES MOORE.
GOVERNOR*

*STATE HOUSE
100 STATE CIRCLE
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401-1925
(410) 974-3901
(TOLL FREE) 1-800-811-8336*

TTY USERS CALL VIA MD RELAY

Dear Chairwoman Beidle, Vice-chair Klausmeier, and members of the committee,

On behalf of Governor Wes Moore, I urge a favorable report on HB583/SB475 - Center for Firearm Violence Prevention - Establishment. The Center for Firearm Violence Prevention and Intervention will be created within the Department of Health to consolidate and better coordinate our State's public health approach to preventing gun violence. This legislation also requires the Center to create a state plan that will be updated every four years with the goal of reducing firearm violence in Maryland.

The Center within the Department of Health will serve as a partner to federal and local governments, advocates, institutions, and medical professionals engaged in the work of hospital- and community-based violence intervention programs. There is significant evidence that violence, particularly in areas where there is a high incidence of it, can be contagious in the sense that a violent act may inspire other violent acts in retaliation. The goal of public health approaches to violence reduction is to interrupt these cycles of violence, and to inoculate the public against violence by engaging in direct, community-focused efforts that engage with individuals in their own communities and in health care settings.

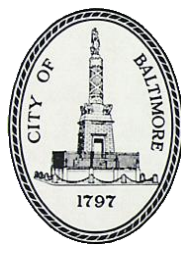
Governor Moore is proud to sponsor legislation that follows President Biden's recommendation that states create their own offices of gun violence prevention. Gun violence intervention programs were pioneered in Maryland, but there is more work to do to ensure that they are adequately funded and informed by the best available data. The Moore-Miller Administration's top priority is keeping our communities safe. 75% of homicides in Maryland are committed with a firearm. This is a public safety and public health crisis that we must address.

Sincerely,
Myles Hicks
Deputy Legislative Officer
Office of the Governor

SB0475-FIN-SUPP.pdf

Uploaded by: Nina Themelis

Position: FAV



BRANDON M. SCOTT
MAYOR

*Office of Government Relations
88 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401*

SB0475

February 29, 2024

TO: Members of the Senate Finance Committee
FROM: Nina Themelis, Director of Mayor's Office of Government Relations
RE: Senate Bill 475 – Center for Firearm Violence Prevention - Establishment
POSITION: FAVORABLE

Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Klausmeier, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** Senate Bill (SB) 475.

SB 475 establishes the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention within the Maryland Department of Health, which will partner with federal, State, and local agencies and affected communities to implement a whole-of-government, public health approach to firearm violence reduction.

Firearm injuries are the leading causes of death for youth ages 1-19 nationally, with disproportionately high impacts on communities of color.^{i,ii} Gun violence deaths are increasing nationwide, and even more so in Maryland. The state's rate of gun violence deaths has increased dramatically over the last decade, increasing by 54% from 2012 to 2021, compared to a 39% increase nationally.ⁱⁱⁱ The incidence of gun violence involving youth has significantly increased over the past year.^{ii,iv} According to Baltimore Police data, in 2023 there were 276 non-fatal shootings and 80 homicides involving youth under 24 years of age.

Addressing this crisis requires a multi-level and multi-faceted approach that includes going upstream to address the root causes of violence. The public health approach to violence prevention is grounded in science and recognized as a best practice. It emphasizes a multi-sector approach to understanding the problem, identifying root causes, and developing strategies for prevention.^v Streamlining and coordinating these efforts from the state level will help strengthen local efforts for systems-level change.

For these reasons, the BCA respectfully requests a **favorable** report on SB 475.

ⁱ US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2023). Fast Facts: Firearm Violence and Injury Prevention. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/firearms/fastfact.html>

ⁱⁱ Bailey K. Roberts, Colleen P. Nofi, Emma Cornell, Sandeep Kapoor, Laura Harrison, Chethan Sathya; Trends and Disparities in Firearm Deaths Among Children. *Pediatrics* September 2023; 152 (3): e2023061296. 10.1542/peds.2023-061296

ⁱⁱⁱ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. National Vital Statistics System, Mortality 2018-2021 on CDC WONDER Online Database, released in 2021. Data are from the Multiple Cause of Death Files, 2018-2021, as compiled from data provided by the 57 vital statistics jurisdictions through the Vital Statistics Cooperative Program. Retrieved from <http://wonder.cdc.gov/ucd-icd10-expanded.html>

^{iv} Goldstick, J., Cunningham, R., & Carter, P. (2022). Current Causes of Death in Children and Adolescents in the United States. *N Engl J Med* 2022; 386:1955-1956. DOI: 10.1056/NEJMc2201761

^v Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022). The Public Health Approach to Violence Prevention. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/about/publichealthapproach.html>

SB475- LWVMD- FAV- Center for Firearm Violence Pre

Uploaded by: Nora Miller Smith

Position: FAV



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,¹ 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.

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

SB 475 - MSAA Favorable.pdf

Uploaded by: Patrick Gilbert

Position: FAV



Maryland State's Attorneys' Association

3300 North Ridge Road, Suite 185

Ellicott City, Maryland 21043

410-203-9881

FAX 410-203-9891

Rich Gibson
President

Steven I. Kroll
Coordinator

DATE: February 29, 2024

BILL NUMBER: SB 475

POSITION: Support

The Maryland State's Attorneys' Association (MSAA) supports Senate Bill 475.

Gun violence has reached epidemic proportions in our state, and is now the leading cause of death among children and teens in Maryland. MSAA sees the human cost of this violence every day as it seeks justice for victims and their families in our criminal legal system. The interests served by prosecution of firearms offenders, though – interests like accountability, rehabilitation, and deterrence – are just one piece of this puzzle. SB 475 prioritizes another piece, one that must be at the forefront of our efforts: prevention.

SB 475 creates the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention, and ensures a holistic, public health approach to violence prevention and intervention. MSAA applauds Governor Moore and the sponsors of this important piece of legislation for providing for an evidence-based, “whole-of-government” approach to such an urgent challenge, and looks forward to collaborating with stakeholders and community leaders at all levels across the state to make our communities safer.

2024 MD State OGVP Written Testimony - SB 475.pdf

Uploaded by: Ramya Swami

Position: FAV

840 First Street NE
Suite 400
Washington D.C. 20002



Testimony of Ramya Swami, State Policy Manager, Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence
Support for SB 475
Before the Maryland Senate Finance Committee

February 29, 2024

Dear Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Klausmeier, and Members of the Maryland Senate Finance Committee,

Founded in 1974, Brady works across Congress, courts, and communities, uniting gun owners and non-gun owners alike, to take action, not sides, and end America's gun violence epidemic. Brady today carries the name of Jim Brady, who was shot and severely injured in the assassination attempt on President Ronald Reagan. Jim and his wife, Sarah led the fight to pass federal legislation requiring background checks for gun sales. Brady continues to uphold Jim and Sarah's legacy by uniting Americans from coast to coast, red and blue, young and old, liberal and conservative, to combat the epidemic of gun violence. **In furtherance of our goal to reduce firearm violence across Maryland, the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence is proud to support the passage of SB 475.**

Maryland leaders have persisted in prioritizing the safety and well-being of the people of Hawaii by enacting and implementing proactive, research-informed policy solutions that prevent gun violence, save lives, and spare entire communities from loss, trauma and cycles of violence. However, the latest data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows that 785 people in Hawaii are killed by gun violence each year, nearly 300 of whom die by firearm suicide.¹

One firearm death is too many, and these numbers demonstrate that there remains more work to be done to ensure the safety of Maryland residents and visitors.

It is imperative that we start treating gun violence as a public health epidemic. By prioritizing research and programs that are tailored towards addressing the root causes of gun violence, this legislature has the chance to disrupt cycles of violence and create safer, healthier communities for all citizens of Maryland.

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), *WISQARS Injury Data*, <https://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/index.html>

The proposed Center for Firearm Violence Prevention and Intervention would serve as a vital first step towards expanding access to funding for the state to address various forms of gun violence, including suicides, mass shootings, and surges in other forms of gun violence. Its collaboration with public health experts, community leaders, organizers, and groups most impacted by gun violence will enhance the state's ability to implement comprehensive solutions to reduce gun violence within its borders. Further, the Center's focus on data collection will empower future State Legislatures to continue to lead in this space, by introducing and implementing violence reduction policies that are backed by data.

Conclusion

As the first state office of this kind, the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention and Intervention would be a vital resource for coordinating efforts between federal, state, and local agencies, facilitating data collection and research, and developing best practices for community violence intervention programs.

For these reasons, Brady urges a favorable report on SB 475, so Maryland may continue to be an example for other states to follow in the Gun Violence Prevention Space.

Sincerely,
Ramya Swami

Testimony in support of SB0475.pdf

Uploaded by: Richard KAP Kaplowitz

Position: FAV

SB0475_RichardKaplowitz_FAV
2/29/2022

Richard Keith Kaplowitz
Frederick, MD 21703-7134

TESTIMONY ON SB#0475 - POSITION: FAVORABLE

Center for Firearm Violence Prevention – Establishment

TO: Chair Beidle, Vice Chair Klausmeier and members of the Finance 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 SB#0475, Center for Firearm Violence Prevention – Establishment

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 partner the state with both Federal and local agencies and affected communities to implement a public health approach to firearm violence reduction.

This bill adds tools for treatment of the public health emergency guns have created in Maryland and will help us understand and create ways for 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 some of the gun safety bills introduced in this session, 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”. While punishment of the perpetrator is necessary we have to consider the victims and how to heal them and the community.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB0475.

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/>

SB0475 - MSBA Criminal Law Section - Support Lette

Uploaded by: Shaoli Katana

Position: FAV



MSBA Main Office
520 West Fayette Street
Baltimore, MD 21201
410-685-7878 | msba.org

Annapolis Office
200 Duke of Gloucester Street
Annapolis, MD 21401
410-269-6464 | msba.org

To: Members of the Senate Finance Committee
From: Doyle Niemann, Chair, Legislative Committee, Criminal Law and Practice Section,
Maryland State Bar Association
Subject: **SB475 – Center for Firearm Violence Prevention Establishment**
Date: February 28, 2024
Position: **Favorable**

The Legislative Committee of the Criminal Law & Practice Section of the Maryland State Bar Association (MSBA) **Supports SB475 - Center for Firearm Violence Prevention - Establishment.**

This bill will establish a Center for Firearm Violence Prevention in the Maryland Department of Health. As stated in the bill, its purpose is to reduce firearm violence, the harm from firearm violence and misuse of firearms in the state. It envisions partnerships with federal, state and local agencies and local communities – all with a goal of implementing a public health approach to firearm violence.

There are few issues of greater importance today that reducing firearm violence at every level of society. Far too many people have been or will be victims of firearms. While the misuse of firearms is a criminal matter, preventing that misuse and helping individuals and communities cope with firearm violence are compelling public health issues. The proposed Center for Firearm Violence Prevention is a useful step in the process of mobilizing our resources to stop needless violence from the misuse of firearms.

For the reasons stated, we Support SB475 - Center for Firearm Violence Prevention – Establishment. If you have questions about the position of the Criminal Law and Practice Section’s Legislative Committee, please feel free to address them to me at 240-606-1298 or at doyleniemann@gmail.com.

Should you have other questions, please contact The MSBA’s Legislative Office at (410) 387-5606.

MD Center - Senate Hearing Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Tarria Stanley

Position: FAV



Written Testimony of Tarrisa Stanley
Regional Advocacy Manager, Community Justice
Co-lead, Marylanders to Prevent Gun Violence

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.

Final SB0475 Testimony for 2-29-24 Hearing.pdf

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Position: FAV



SENATE BILL 475

Center for Firearm Violence Prevention - Establishment

WRITTEN TESTIMONY BEFORE THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Tonii Gedin, RN, DNP, Health Officer, Anne Arundel Department of Health

For Anne Arundel Department of Health and the Maryland Association of County Health Officers

The Anne Arundel County Department of Health and the Maryland Association of County Health Officers (MACHO), the professional association of the chief executives of the state's 24 local public health departments (LHDs), **supports SB 475**. The bill establishes the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention within the Maryland Department of Health with the purpose of reducing firearm violence, harm from firearm violence, and misuse of firearms in the State by partnering with federal, state, and local agencies and affected communities to implement a public health approach to firearm violence reduction.

Firearm violence is a leading cause of premature death in the United States, killing more than 38,000 people and causing approximately 85,000 injuries each year¹. Nearly 2,500 Maryland lives were lost due to firearms from 2019-2021, with over half of these deaths to residents under the age of 35 years.² In addition to the preventable loss of life, family and community trauma, firearm violence is estimated to cost the state of Maryland \$10.5 billion³ per year.

While Maryland is a national leader with strong firearm safety laws, our firearm violence rate is higher compared to other states with similar laws.⁴ A public health approach is needed to address escalating firearm violence, which relies on recognizing violence is contagious like a disease, and can become an epidemic within a society.⁵ There are proven methods to address firearm violence, and a statewide public health approach, using evidence-based methods, is needed to address the growing problem of firearm violence in Maryland.

Anne Arundel County has prioritized addressing firearm violence through a countywide public health approach by bringing together partners from various sectors in our Gun Violence Intervention Team (GVIT). While we are actively working to reduce firearm violence in our county consistent support is needed across the state to reduce firearm violence. The Center for Firearm Violence Prevention will promote best practices as well as seek needed federal funding to support statewide prevention efforts that will benefit all Maryland jurisdictions.

For these reasons, the Anne Arundel County Department of Health and the Maryland Association of County Health Officers **supports SB 475**. For more information, please contact Ruth Maiorana, MACHO Executive Director at rmajora1@jhu.edu or 410-937-1433. This communication reflects the position of MACHO.

¹ <https://www.apha.org/topics-and-issues/gun-violence>

² CDC Wonder, Underlying Cause of Death, <https://wonder.cdc.gov/ucd-icd10.html>

³ <https://governor.maryland.gov/news/press/pages/governor-moore-proclaims-national-gun-violence-awareness-day-in-maryland.aspx#:~:text=In%20Maryland%2C%20gun%20violence%20causes,which%20is%20paid%20by%20taxpayers.>

⁴ <https://everytownresearch.org/rankings/>

⁵ <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamainternalmedicine/article-abstract/2594800>

PROGRESS Testimony in SUPPORT of SB0475.pdf

Uploaded by: Woodie Kessel

Position: FAV



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PROGRESS Co-Directors:
 Joseph B. Richardson, Jr., PhD
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**TESTIMONY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND PROGRESS INITIATIVE
 ON FEBRUARY 29, 2024
 BEFORE THE MARYLAND SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE
 SUPPORTING SENATE BILL 475 - CROSS-FILED WITH: SB475
 CENTER FOR FIREARM VIOLENCE PREVENTION – ESTABLISHMENT**

Honorable Chair Pamela Beidle, Vice-Chair Katherine Klausmeier, and Members of the Committee:

The University of Maryland’s PROGRESS Initiative provides this testimony in support of Senate Bill 475 - Center for Firearm Violence Prevention – Establishment, sponsored by President of the Senate Bill Ferguson by request of the Moore Administration and the many Co-sponsor Senators. Responding to the need to address the epidemic of gun violence, this legislation establishes the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention in the Maryland Department of Health to reduce firearm violence, harm from firearm violence, and misuse of firearms. SB475 calls for a public health approach to firearm violence reduction that would emphasize science-informed actions; utilizing data and research to formulate effective strategies and solutions; and coordination between federal, state, and local agencies and authorities including academia, law enforcement, communities and advocates.

Gun violence in America continues to be a tragic and uniquely American epidemic affecting all communities all across our country. Schools, churches, mosques, synagogues, grocery stores, hospitals, malls, entertainment venues, nightclubs, neighborhoods, streets, malls, and homes are not safe places. According to the CDC, there were 48,830 firearm deaths in the US in 2021, amounting to nearly 134 fatalities on average every day from homicide, suicide, unintentional injury, and legal intervention.¹ Firearm related morbidity is estimated at 3-5 times the number of deaths with untold human and capital costs.

In Maryland in 2021 there were 915 deaths from firearms with 592 homicides and 310 deaths by suicide.² Gun violence is now the leading cause of death for children and youth surpassing motor vehicle deaths and those caused by other injuries in our State. Baltimore and Prince George’s County account for 75% of all fatal and nonfatal shootings in the State.

Root factors such as poverty, racism, misinformation, and law enforcement tensions have been inextricably linked to the rising numbers of homicide, suicide, and mass shooting firearm deaths. For decades, gun violence has been the leading cause of death and disability among

¹ CDC Wisqars On-line Causes of Injury-Related Death Data Base, Violence-related Firearm Deaths; Both Sexes; All Ages; All Races and Ethnicity; US and Maryland; 2021.
<https://wisqars.cdc.gov/explore/?o=MORT&y1=2021&y2=2021&g=00&g=24&t=0&i=0&m=20890&d=&s=0&r=0&m=0&ry=2&yp=65&e=0&a=ALL&a1=0&a2=199&g1=0&g2=199>

² Ibid





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Black males ages 16-44. It has become the leading cause of death for children and youth in the US, surpassing motor vehicle crash deaths. Gun violence costs Maryland an estimated \$10.5 billion annually with Maryland taxpayers bearing an estimated \$384 million.^{3,4,5}

Preventing the tragic consequences of gun violence in our communities and our nation is among the highest priorities and grand challenges of our time. University of Maryland President Darryll J. Pines has directed action now to “do something” to summon all of our strengths and assets to act for the public’s good and prevent gun violence and save lives. He said, “Effective solutions to grand challenges demands fearless ideas...” and established The University of Maryland Prevent Gun Violence: Research, Empowerment, Strategies and Solutions (PROGRESS) Initiative in November 2023.

The provisions of SB475 to establish the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention focused on employing a public health approach in addition to legislative/law enforcement strategies are consonant with and complimentary to PROGRESS. PROGRESS addresses two key pillars of the University of Maryland's strategic plan: to accelerate solutions to humanity’s grand challenges and to advance the public good. Sponsored by the Office of the President and housed within the College of Behavior and Social Science, the mission of PROGRESS is to reduce firearm-related violence using a multi-disciplinary, community-based and translational science public health approach to promote actionable gun violence interventions to promote public safety and enhance the quality of life for the people of Maryland, the National Capital Region, and the nation. UMD President Darryll Pines tasked Joseph Richardson, PhD and Woodie Kessel, MD, MPH with developing, implementing and leading PROGRESS.

SB475 is also consistent with the recently established White House Office of Gun Violence Prevention responsibilities including enhancing the federal government’s partnerships with cities and states to help them advance their own efforts to reduce gun violence.⁶

In summary, SB475 offers a comprehensive approach that will enhance the safety of Marylanders aligning with evidence-based practices and addressing critical issues related to the prevention of gun violence employing an important public health approach. PROGRESS urges the committee to produce a favorable report supporting Senate Bill 475 (and the cross-filed

³ The Economic Cost of Gun Violence. 7.19.22; <https://everytownresearch.org/report/the-economic-cost-of-gun-violence/>

⁴ Cost of gun violence: Ted R. Miller and Bruce Lawrence analysis of CDC fatal injury: 2019 and HCUP nonfatal injury: 2019.

⁵ Gun Violence in Maryland. EveryStat.org

⁶ FACT SHEET: Vice President Harris Launches the Biden-Harris Administration Safer States Initiative, Highlights New Executive Actions to Reduce Gun Violence. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/12/13/fact-sheet-vice-president-harris-launches-the-biden-harris-administration-safer-states-initiative-highlights-new-executive-actions-to-reduce-gun-violence/>





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House version HB 583) to build on Maryland's efforts to prevent the trauma and nightmare of gun violence in our State. Nothing could be more important.



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PROGRESS is a University of Maryland Fearlessly Forward Initiative sponsored by the Office of the President and housed within the College of Behavior and Social Sciences (BSOS).

SB 475 Center for Firearm Prevention.pdf

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Position: UNF



SB 475
Center for Firearm Violence Prevention

UNFAVORABLE

While we applaud efforts to reduce violent crime, the Maryland State Rifle & Pistol Association (MSRPA) opposes SB 475 and the spending of taxpayer dollars especially when the State is facing a \$1.1 billion deficit.

The bill is vaguely worded and insufficiently detailed for definitive interpretation. In addition, it creates a bureaucratic office with no legislative oversight or checks on its actions or authority.

The members of the MSRPA are willing and able to contribute to the state's efforts to identify meaningful ways to prevent violent crime and protect Maryland citizens. Why not invite the pro-Second Amendment community to participate?

The MSRPA respectfully requests an Unfavorable report on SB 475 Center for Firearm Violence Prevention.

Cathy Wright, MSRPA VP Legislative Affairs

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<https://msrpa.org>

The MSRPA is the official National Rifle Association state organization for Maryland. The MSRPA's mission is to defend our rights in Maryland, support training in firearm safety and shooting skills through its affiliated clubs, and sponsor and sanction local competition throughout the state.

sb0475_kasuba_UNFAVORABLE.pdf

Uploaded by: Thomas Kasuba

Position: UNF

Please **UNFAVORABLE** SB475
Center for Firearm Violence Prevention – Establishment

Maryland had the 3rd highest robbery rate in the country in 2022. [1] Well, if that robbery didn't involve a firearm I guess the victims are out of luck.

Maryland's own crime dashboard shows that in 2022, there were over 39,000 crimes against a person that didn't involve a firearm. There were 3,629 incidents that did use a firearm.[2] So, think of it this way; if crimes against people were fingers, 9 of them would NOT involve a firearm but only your one little pinky represents those involving a firearm. Why is the 10 TIMES bigger problem of violence in general being ignored?

There were 1,888 rapes in 2020 in Maryland.[3] Oh well, this center only cares if a firearm was used so I guess that number will just be ignored. Also, using these same Maryland statistics, over 15,000 aggravated assaults happened in 2020. Again, oh well if a firearm wasn't used.

Lets go back to those nearly 2,000 rapes in Maryland. That's WAY more than the number of firearm murders committed in Maryland. Why isn't there a dedicated rape prevention center bill instead? This bill is nothing more than ideological driven virtue signaling. Why do we need taxpayer dollars funneled to pay for a bunch of desk sitters when we already have established "violence prevention centers"; they're called the police force and they actual get out of their plush offices and prevent violence instead of writing about it.

Does this center have an expiration date? Of course not. It will live forever as yet another part of the growing State bureaucracy. Maybe the selectees could "work from home"; not like that will reduce their productivity.

Can this center's funding be interpreted as just an avenue to funnel money to political allies? Just something to ponder.

Thomas J. Kasuba (registered Democrat)
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January 27, 2024

[1] <https://www.statista.com/statistics/232564/robbery-rate-in-the-us-by-state/>

[2] <https://mdsp.maryland.gov/Pages/Dashboards/NIBRSCrimeDashboard.aspx>

[3] <https://goccp.maryland.gov/data-dashboards/crime-dashboard/>