



[www.courtwatchmontgomery.org](http://www.courtwatchmontgomery.org)

**Senate Bill 753 - Public Safety - Firearm Background Checks, Victim Notification,  
and the Maryland State Police Gun Center  
Judicial Proceedings Committee - February 27, 2024  
SUPPORT**

Good afternoon, Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and honorable committee members. **Court Watch Montgomery (CWM)** is pleased to submit this testimony in support of SB753. CWM is one of the only organizations in Maryland that observes and collects data about what actually happens in domestic violence hearings, including data regarding possession and use of firearms. Please review [our recent report](#) on how the Montgomery County judicial system handles firearms in intimate partner violence cases.

It is evident that the presence of a firearm can be the determining factor between life and death for victims of intimate partner violence. Shockingly, when a domestic abuser has access to firearms, the risk of a domestic violence victim being killed increases fivefold. This harrowing statistic underscores the urgent need to address the issue of firearms in domestic abuse situations. Moreover, data from 2021 in Maryland revealed that guns were tragically used in 76% of domestic violence-related deaths. These alarming figures highlight the critical importance of ensuring that domestic abusers have limited or no access to firearms, even on a temporary basis, as it directly correlates with saving lives and preventing further tragedies.

One significant aspect of Senate Bill 753 is the requirement for law enforcement agencies to inform victims if a prohibited individual fails a background check due to a protective order. This provision aims to enhance victim safety and ensure that necessary measures can be taken to prevent potential harm. Furthermore, the expansion of responsibilities for the Maryland State Police Gun Center outlined in the bill is essential for more effective tracking and reporting of background check denials. By mandating licensed firearms dealers and the Secretary of State Police to notify the Gun Center of such denials, the state can maintain comprehensive records and facilitate better enforcement of firearm regulations.



[www.courtwatchmontgomery.org](http://www.courtwatchmontgomery.org)

In conclusion, CWM firmly supports the intent of and urges the passage of Senate Bill 753 in bolstering firearm background check procedures, enhancing victim notification protocols, and reinforcing the responsibilities of the Maryland State Police Gun Center. These provisions are crucial for the protection and well-being of victims of intimate partner violence within our community. By advocating for these measures, we aim to promote public safety, prevent potential harm, and ensure the responsible handling of firearms in situations of domestic abuse.

Thank you for considering the invaluable impact of this bill on victims of intimate partner violence and the broader community. Thank you for considering our testimony and the valuable insights from our Gun Report. We look forward to continued collaboration in advancing measures that prioritize victim safety and address the critical issue of firearms in domestic violence situations.

**We ask for your support for SB753 and strongly urge a favorable report.**

**With gratitude,**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lavontte Chatmon".

**Lavontte Chatmon**  
Executive Director  
Court Watch Montgomery