



TESTIMONY TO THE HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

HB0794: Regulated Firearms- Maryland Voluntary Do Not Sell Firearm Process

POSITION: Support

BY: Linda Kohn, President

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The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan organization that works to influence public policy through education and advocacy. The League supports violence prevention programs in all communities, funding for research on gun violence, and the regulation of firearms for consumer safety.

The League of Women Voters Maryland thus supports **House Bill 794: Regulated Firearms-Maryland Voluntary Do Not Sell Firearm Process.**

According to the Center for Disease Control,¹ there were 49,449 suicides in our country in 2022 -- the highest number ever recorded. **Over half of all suicides involve a firearm.** Per the Kaiser Family Foundation:² **"Firearms are the most lethal method of suicide attempts. [As] about half of suicide attempts take place within 10 minutes of the suicide thought, having access to firearms is a suicide risk factor."**

An average of 278 Marylanders die by firearm suicide each year. Every attempt should be made to help prevent these impulsive acts. House Bill 794 would create a voluntary registry for those who feel that they are at risk for suicide, and want to be prevented from purchasing firearms in a moment of despair. As this registry would be entirely voluntary, a person could also remove their name from the registry after a three-week waiting period.

Three states -- Utah, Virginia, and Washington -- have already passed legislation creating registries to help limit the ability of some of those most at risk of gun suicide to purchase a firearm.

The League of Women Voters Maryland, with 1,500+ concerned members throughout Maryland, urges a favorable report on House Bill 794.

¹https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/nchs_press_releases/2023/20231129.htm#:~:text=The%20new%20provisiona1%20data%20show,high%20was%2048%2C344%20in%202018.

² <https://www.kff.org/mental-health/issue-brief/do-states-with-easier-access-to-guns-have-more-suicide-deaths-by-firearm/>