

NICOLE A. WILLIAMS, ESQ.
Legislative District 22
Prince George's County

Judiciary Committee

Chair, Public Safety Subcommittee

Vice Chair, Democratic Caucus

Chair, Prince George's
County House Delegation



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 21, 2024

The Honorable Luke Clippinger

Chair of the House Judiciary Committee

6 Bladen Street, Room 101

Annapolis, Maryland 21401

House Bill 546

Good afternoon, Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Bartlett, and the members of the House Judiciary Committee. I am Delegate Nicole Williams, and I will be testifying in favor of House Bill 546, also known as **Handgun Permits - Accidental Discharge and Training Requirements - Maryland State Police Gun Center (Firearm Safety Act of 2024)**. This bill would require individuals who accidentally discharge a firearm to register for firearm safety training within ninety days of the incident. Additionally, these individuals must complete the course within six months. If the person fails to comply, then the Secretary of State Police is required to revoke the handgun permit from the individual.

It is an unfortunate fact that each day in the United States, more than one person is killed due to unintentional gunfire. This makes up for about two percent of total gun-related deaths and accounts for around 40% of all non-fatal firearm injuries. If this bill were to be implemented, we could help assuage this large number of firearm injuries in Maryland, as around 30% of Maryland adult households own at least one gun. Additionally, guns are the leading cause of death in children and teenagers in the state of Maryland. When gun-owning parents or guardians do not safely lock up their firearms, they can fall into the hands of children, causing extreme harm. We, unfortunately, have heard too many cases where young children have killed their relatives or friends due to firearms being left out without supervision. This leads to children having to live with the guilt of their loved ones' deaths or injuries for the rest of their lives. Additionally, no individual should have to go through the pain of experiencing and coping with death or serious injury if it could have been easily avoided by proper care of weapons. The implementation of this legislation would prevent such horrible events from occurring and maintain the safety of our Maryland residents.

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Careless individuals should not possess weapons that can cause so much harm without knowing how to store and utilize them properly. This bill not only enforces firearms safety training but also promotes incentives for individuals to store their firearms safely. The legislation within this bill may prevent future accidents, educate citizens on the importance of firearm safety, promote responsible gun ownership, and increase the confidence and competence of firearm owners. Passing this legislation may assuage the chances of unnecessary deaths of innocent Maryland citizens in the future.

For these reasons, I urge this committee to give a favorable report on House Bill 546.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nicole Williams', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Delegate Nicole A. Williams, Esq.