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February 19, 2024

The Honorable Luke Clippinger
Chairman, House Judiciary Committee
101 House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chair Clippinger:

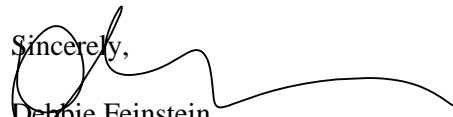
I write in support of HB869, Public Safety—Firearm Background Checks, Victim Notification, and the Maryland State Police Gun Center. I am the Chief of the Special Victims Division for the Montgomery County State's Attorney's Office and I chair the Montgomery County Domestic Violence Fatality Review Team. I am a member of the Governor's Family Violence Council and chair of the Maryland State's Attorneys' Association's Special Victims' Subcommittee, which includes representatives from jurisdictions across the state.

In 2022, 35 adults and 5 children were victims of domestic violence homicide in Maryland. An additional 16 people were killed as a result of domestic violence, including abusive partners. Seventy-five of the deaths were caused by a gun. Moreover, the risk of homicide for women increases by 500% with the presence of a gun in the home.

House Bill 869 closes a gap in Maryland law. Currently, if a protective order prohibits an abuser from purchasing or possessing a firearm, the victim is not notified if the respondent tries to legally purchase a firearm and is denied. House Bill 869 requires Maryland State Police to notify the victim if the respondent tries to legally purchase a firearm. This notification is critical to the safety and welfare of domestic violence victims. With prompt notification, victims can take necessary measures to protect themselves and their families.

I urge the House Judiciary Committee to issue a favorable report on HB869.

Sincerely,


Debbie Feinstein
Chief, Special Victims Division
Senior Assistant State's Attorney