

HB 869_JoShifrin_FAV

Date of Hearing: February 21, 2024

Jo Shifrin

Bethesda, MD 20817

TESTIMONY ON HB 869 POSITION: FAVORABLE

**Public Safety - Firearm Background Checks, Victim Notification, and the
Maryland State Police Gun Center**

TO: Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Bartlett, and members of the Judiciary Committee

FROM: Jo Shifrin

My name is Jo Shifrin. I am a resident of District 16. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB 869, Public Safety - Firearm Background Checks, Victim Notification, and the Maryland State Police Gun Center.

I've been a District 16 resident for the past 10 years. My support for this legislation comes from my grounding in Jewish values and my graduate training in public health. Judaism offers a moral framework: belief that there is infinite value in every human life and an obligation to repair the world: that is, to make the world a more fair and equitable place for everyone to live. My public health training taught me that gun violence is a public health crisis in the United States. Unlike the majority of other countries, the United States has an extremely high rate of gun violence.

This bill requires a law enforcement agency to inform a person that was a victim of violence that their victimizer has failed a background check in an effort to purchase a gun. If the system works, it's a great thing that a background check was administered, that it failed and that the gun was not sold. However, it is imperative that law enforcement and any prior victims are notified.

The risk of homicide for women increases 5-fold with the presence of a gun in the home. Young women, particularly women of color, are especially at risk and represent a disproportionate number of domestic violence homicides, especially by firearms.

I believe that we need common sense gun legislation in our state, and most gun owners and residents of Maryland agree. Although we have other common sense gun legislation in Maryland, we continue to see gun deaths by people who should never, ever have access to a gun and we need to protect victims from these people.

I strongly support and respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB 869.

