Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

Testimony in Support of - HB 935 -
Comprehensive Community Safety Funding Act

TO: Vanessa Atterbeary, Chair and Members of the Ways and Means Committee.
FROM: Ken Shilling, Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland
        Gun Violence Prevention Lead Advocate
DATE: February 21, 2024

As a Unitarian Universalist, I know that conscience will not be quieted by anything less than truth and justice. Gun violence is a public health epidemic in this country.

Gun violence is the leading cause of death for our children. We have a moral duty to provide sustained funding of effective programs dedicated to victim support and violence prevention. In the spirit of love that binds us in community, I ask you to support **HB 935 - Comprehensive Community Safety Funding Act**.

I give sacred witness to the trauma, grief, and economic burden caused by gun violence. Victims of gun violence suffer shock trauma comparable to wounds suffered by our military. The trauma-related health care is specialized and expensive. Moreover, survivors of homicide victims deserve victim assistance, advocacy and support as they deal with their grief and trauma from their loss of loved ones.

We need to restore public safety to our communities. Our communities are disrupted by gun violence. Our communities need violence intervention and prevention services to reduce the impact of gun violence. We need to fund a holistic approach to address, intervene, and prevent gun violence in our communities.

SB 784 requires an excise tax on certain gross receipts of certain firearms dealers derived from the sales of firearms, firearm accessories, and ammunition in the State. This tax targets the industry profits, not consumers, and supports programs vital to our communities.

We have a moral duty to provide for public safety. Let us act together in Love.

We urge a favorable report. Vote for House Bill 935.

Ken Shilling

Ken Shilling, Gun Violence Prevention Lead Advocate