



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**February 7, 2025**  
**SPONSOR TESTIMONY**  
**Senate Bill 509**  
**Prohibited Possession of Firearms**  
**- Assisted Outpatient Treatment Respondents**

Chairman Smith and Committee Members

Thank you for the opportunity to introduce and provide key details regarding SB 509- the Prohibited Possession of Firearms - Assisted Outpatient Treatment Respondents

For the record, I am Senator Shaneka Helson from the 30th Legislative District of Anne Arundel County, MD.

This Bill is also cross-filed (HB0592) and cosponsored with Delegate Scott Phillips from Legislative District 10, Baltimore County, MD.

This bill prohibits a person from possessing a regulated firearm, rifle, or shotgun if the person is currently a respondent subject to a court order to comply with an assisted outpatient treatment (AOT) program. If a court orders a person to comply with an AOT program, the court must promptly report specified information through

The fundamental purpose of SB 509 is to prohibit a person with a diagnosed severe mental illness from possessing a regulated firearm, rifle, or shotgun if that person is currently subject to a court order to comply with a designated AOT - assisted outpatient treatment. It requires a court to promptly report this information through a state designated a secure portal, approved by the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS).if the court orders a person to comply with a specified assisted outpatient treatment program; and generally relating to persons prohibited from possessing regulated firearms, rifles, and shotguns.

This Bill does not change the intent of SB 453 which established a critically needed state "Assisted Outpatient Treatment Program" that became law as of January 25, 2025. Instead, it fixes a loophole, found within the State Code ..... about regulated firearms, rifles, or shotguns. In correcting this loophole, this bill strengthens the existing legislation signed

into law by Governor Moore for the States public defenders to provide representation in assisting outpatients with the procedures for the established outpatient program.

With us today to provide essential information about real-life reasons for this Bill is Paul Nestadt, M.D.

The James Wah Professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences  
Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, Department of Psychiatry

After you hear the testimony from those here today, I request that you give a favorable report to SB 509.