



In support of HB1050 Family Law - Protective Orders - Surrender of Firearms

Dear Chair Clippinger, Vice-Chair Bartlett, and members of the House Judiciary Committee.

My name is Layla Greten and I am voicing our support for HB 1050 as the intern for the Baltimore County Commission for Women.

In the United States, 4.5 million women report being threatened with a gun by an intimate partner, and nearly one million have been shot by an intimate partner. The presence of a firearm in a domestic violence incident increases the likelihood by five times that a woman will be shot. Survivors in Maryland face the same risks due to a gap in firearm relinquishment protocols. The inability of law enforcement to safely remove firearms from abusers during the interim stages of a protective order increases the risk of injury or death.

This bill closes the gaps by ensuring firearms are relinquished or removed during all stages of the protective order, including interim and temporary by mandating strict timelines. If the firearm is not relinquished, law enforcement will have the authority to seize the firearm. These measures would create a safer environment for the survivors of domestic violence.

Closing these gaps provides protection in these high-risk scenarios particularly when children are involved. We know that children who are present when domestic violence occurs are 1/3 to 1/2 more likely to be abused, injured or killed. Being exposed to the cycle of violence at a young age can increase the risks of children growing up to repeat the same acts of abuse. Not only can that trauma last a lifetime, they are at increased risk of developing PTSD, depression, or other anxiety disorders.

This issue is not just abstract to me, it's personal. I have a member of my family who was in an abusive marriage. When researching this bill, I wondered what could have happened to her if her husband had a firearm. The thought alone terrified me. This bill is vital in protecting survivors of domestic violence, their children, and our communities from gun violence.

In conclusion, the Baltimore County Commission for Women strongly urges a favorable report of HB1050.

Signed,

Layla Greten

Intern Baltimore County Commission for Women