



**HB 1050 FAV**

**TO:** The Honorable Delegate Luke Clippinger, Chair  
The Honorable Delegate J. Sandy Bartlett  
House Judiciary Committee

**FROM:** Alexander McCourt, JD, PhD, MPH  
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Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions

**DATE:** February 20, 2025

**RE:** HB 1050 Family Law – Protective Orders – Surrender of Firearms

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I am an assistant professor at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health where I serve as core faculty in the Center for Gun Violence Solutions. I am a public health lawyer and have been studying state gun laws for a decade. The Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions **supports HB 1050 Family Law – Protective Orders – Surrender of Firearms.**

Victims of domestic violence are at an elevated risk of being killed by an abusive partner if that partner has access to a gun. This bill would strengthen Maryland's domestic violence protections by providing specific instructions for firearm relinquishment and expanding firearm purchase and possession prohibitions to include interim protective orders.

When a violent intimate partner has access to a gun, the risk of death for the victim increases significantly. Researchers affiliated with our Center found in a 2003 study that intimate partner homicide was five times more likely when the abuser had access to a gun.<sup>1</sup> About 50% of intimate partner homicides are committed with a gun.<sup>2</sup> Guns are also often used in nonfatal domestic violence. This violence can include brandishing a firearm, striking the victim with a gun, or threatening to shoot the victim or someone else.<sup>3</sup> Individuals who engage in domestic violence are also at an elevated risk of engaging in future violence. A 2021 study found that in 68.2% of mass shootings that occurred between 2014 and 2019, the perpetrator killed a partner or family member or had a history of domestic violence.



Protective orders are a key mechanism for reducing the risk of intimate partner violence, but state laws vary with respect to how these orders affect access to firearms by perpetrators. According to our research, these policy variances have significant implications for gun violence. My colleagues and I conducted a study published in the *American Journal of Epidemiology* in which we identified these policy elements and determined which affected intimate partner homicide rates. We found that when states enacted laws that required firearm removal for ex parte (temporary) restraining orders for domestic violence, intimate partner homicide decreased 13%. Additionally, we found that when states enacted laws that explicitly required relinquishment of firearms after a domestic violence protective order was issued, those states experienced a 12% reduction in intimate partner homicide.<sup>4</sup> HB 1050 would add firearm removal for ex parte orders of protection and would strengthen Maryland's firearm relinquishment provisions, bringing our state laws in line with our research findings.

Accordingly, the Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE** committee report on **HB 1050**.

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  2. Zeoli AM, Malinski R, Turchan B. Risks and Targeted Interventions: Firearms in Intimate Partner Violence. *Epidemiologic Reviews*. 2016;38(1):125-139. doi:10.1093/epirev/mxv007
  3. Adhia A, Lyons VH, Moe CA, Rowhani-Rahbar A, Rivara FP. Nonfatal use of firearms in intimate partner violence: Results of a national survey. *Prev Med*. 2021;147:106500. doi:10.1016/j.ypmed.2021.106500
  4. Zeoli AM, McCourt A, Buggs S, Frattaroli S, Lilley D, Webster DW. Analysis of the Strength of Legal Firearms Restrictions for Perpetrators of Domestic Violence and Their Associations With Intimate Partner Homicide. *Am J Epidemiol*. 2018;187(11):2365-2371. doi:10.1093/aje/kwy174