



HB 1050

Favorable

TO: Del. Luke Clippinger, Chair
Del. J. Sandy Bartlett
Judiciary Committee

FROM: Daniel W. Webster, ScD, MPH
Professor and Distinguished Scholar
Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions

DATE: February 17, 2024

RE: HB 1050 – Family and Law Enforcement Protection Act

I am a tenured professor at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health where I have been leading research on violence and its prevention for more than 30 years. I am testifying in support of SB 943 based on research that I have co-authored in scientific, peer-reviewed journals that are relevant to the role of firearms and other factors in fatal intimate partner violence and the effects of laws intended to prevent fatalities from domestic violence.

As a center that focuses on evidence-based policies to prevent gun violence, the Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions supports **HB 1050 – The Family and Law Enforcement Protection Act**. This bill is designed to prevent the type of tragic deaths that my colleague, Dr. Jacquelyn Campbell and I studied in our ground-breaking study on the determinants of lethal intimate partner violence. We studied cases involving 220 women murdered by intimate partners across 11 large and geographically diverse U.S. cities. Children and other family members were sometimes killed in these incidents. It is the most cited study in the field of domestic violence. We gathered in-depth data to isolate the independent effects of conditions that predict whether a woman in a physically abusive intimate relationship would be killed by her abusive partner or ex-partner. The abuser's ownership of a firearm increased the risk of homicide by an intimate partner 5-fold above that of unarmed abusers. Other key predictors of lethal outcomes were prior threats with a lethal weapon (commonly a firearm) and the period shortly after a victim left a violent, controlling partner.¹ These conditions are precisely the ones that victims of intimate partner regularly face that prompt them to seek emergency relief from the court to protect themselves and often their children. Also, these are conditions that are the most dangerous for

¹ Campbell JC, Webster DW, Koziol-McLain J, et al. Risk factors for femicide within physically abusive intimate relationships: Results from a multi-site case control study. *American Journal of Public Health* 2003; 93:1089-97.



law enforcement officers to intervene with armed violent individuals distraught over the separation from their partners and children.

Because state laws vary in how broadly they protect victims of domestic violence with firearm prohibitions for individuals who engage in domestic violence, my colleagues and I conducted a study published in the *American Journal of Epidemiology* to ascertain which policy attributes were most important in reducing intimate partner homicides. When states enacted laws to require firearm removal in ex parte restraining orders for domestic violence, rates of intimate partner homicide with firearms by 16% and overall intimate partner homicide rates by 13%. States that did not extend these protections to victims with ex parte orders saw no decline in intimate partner homicide.²

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

² Zeoli AM, McCourt A, Buggs S, Lilley D, Frattaroli S, Webster DW. Analysis of the strength of legal firearms restrictions for perpetrators of domestic violence and their impact on intimate partner homicide. *American Journal of Epidemiology* 2018;187(11):2365–2371. doi: 10.1093/aje/kwy174