

The banner features the text "Young Democrats of Maryland" in a bold, white, sans-serif font. The text is centered and framed by two horizontal white lines. Behind the text is a blue silhouette of the state of Maryland. To the right of the state map, there is a faint, grayscale image of the Maryland State Capitol building.

# Young Democrats of Maryland

## **HB387 - Comprehensive Community Safety Funding Act Ways and Means Committee - 2/13/25 SUPPORT**

Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and Members of the Ways and Means Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on this priority bill for the Young Democrats of Maryland. YDM represents the next generation of Marylanders and seeks to advance policies that will allow Maryland youth to thrive.

The Young Democrats of Maryland support HB387: Comprehensive Community Safety Funding Act, which will impose an excise tax on certain gross receipts from firearm sales in Maryland. The revenue generated from the tax will be used to fund various programs that aim to prevent, interrupt, and provide support after gun violence occurs.

Those who manufacture and distribute firearms do so at great financial benefit for themselves; however, their products can often lead to deadly outcomes and dangerous situations for members of our communities. Even in Maryland, which has some of the strongest gun violence prevention legislation in the country, firearm-related incidents remain highly pervasive. In 2022, which was the last time the CDC finalized data for such a study, Maryland had the 9th highest gun homicide rate in the country. Additionally, firearms were the leading cause of death among children/teens ages 1-17,<sup>1</sup> and non-fatal shooting victimization of young people quadrupled in 2023.<sup>2</sup>

Apart from the lives lost and life-altering injuries accrued as a result of gun violence, firearms impose an economic burden on Marylanders as well. In 2023, Maryland ranked 30th in the country for healthcare spending as a result of gun violence. Youth survivors of gun violence spend \$34,884 more, on average, for health care.<sup>3</sup> In passing this bill, we would require firearm manufacturers and distributors to use a small portion of their earnings to bear some of this financial responsibility.

This bill does not seek to penalize businesses or punish the firearm industry, but rather contribute to our collective mission of reducing gun violence. For these reasons, YDM respectfully urges a favorable report on HB387.

Mark Brewster

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<sup>1</sup> <https://publichealth.jhu.edu/center-for-gun-violence-solutions/maryland>

<sup>2</sup> [https://djs.maryland.gov/Documents/MD-DJS-Juvenile-Crime-Data-Brief\\_20230912.pdf](https://djs.maryland.gov/Documents/MD-DJS-Juvenile-Crime-Data-Brief_20230912.pdf)

<sup>3</sup>

<https://hms.harvard.edu/news/health-economic-toll-gun-violence-youth#:~:text=Firearm%20deaths%20and%20injuries%20among%20injury%2C%20according%20to%20the%20analysis>.

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