

**Testimony in Support of
HB 250 - Income Tax - Credit for Firearm Safety Devices**

TO: Vanessa Atterbeary, Chair and Members of the Ways and Means Committee.
FROM: Laticia Hicks
DATE: January 29, 2025

As a mother of two school-aged children, I am writing to express my strong support for **HB 250 - Income Tax - Credit for Firearm Safety Devices**, which aims to further protect our communities from the devastating effects of gun violence. Programs like gun buyback programs have proven to be effective tools in promoting safety, providing much-needed incentives for individuals to take responsible actions. Incentives often bridge the gap between good intentions and meaningful actions, making these programs essential for the security of Marylanders.

Unfortunately, gun violence continues to impact our communities in tragic ways. Just yesterday, in Baltimore, a 9-year-old girl visiting her grandmother accidentally shot herself with an unsecured firearm. Baltimore Police Commissioner Richard Worley stated that “all indications are the young lady got ahold of a weapon that was unsecured and shot herself.” This heartbreaking incident was entirely preventable, highlighting the urgent need for stronger measures like those proposed in HB 250.

In 2022, firearms were the leading cause of death among children and teens aged 1–17 years old, according to the Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions. This issue is not limited to specific economic classes—it affects families from all walks of life.

Like Jaelynn’s Law, which strengthened Maryland’s gun violence prevention measures, HB 250 is another critical step toward a safer future where no parent has to grieve the loss of a child to an accidental shooting. I urge you and your colleagues to support HB 250 and help make Maryland a leader in protecting all of its children from gun violence.

Thank you for your leadership and attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

Laticia Hicks

District 33