



## Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

### Testimony in Support of - HB 387 - Comprehensive Community Safety Funding Act

TO: Delegate Vanessa Atterbeary, Chair, and Members of the Ways and Means Committee.  
FROM: Ken Shilling, Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland,  
Gun Violence Prevention Lead Advocate  
DATE: February 13, 2025

Gun violence is a public health epidemic in Prince George's county and throughout our state. As a Unitarian Universalist, I speak on behalf of the Beloved Community. In the spirit of love that connects us, I ask you to support **HB 387 - Comprehensive Community Safety Funding Act**.

Unitarian Universalists believe that we have a moral duty to support victims and prevent violence. But with the budget shortfall, we will need to be creative to procure sustained funding of effective programs. **HB 387** requires "an excise tax on certain gross receipts of certain firearms dealers derived from the sales of firearms in the State." This tax targets the industry profits, not consumers, and supports programs vital to our communities. This tax is truly an investment that will offset some of the estimated taxpayer cost of \$384 million from incidents of gun violence.

Our communities need violence prevention and intervention services to reduce the impact of gun violence. We need to fund a holistic approach to address, intervene, and prevent gun violence in our communities. For example, the "Let's Thrive" program in Baltimore has been very effective in reducing the deaths from gun violence. This program "is a Youth-led Adult Partnership Organization founded in 2016 to provide Holistic Community Support, Strategies, and Awareness for families impacted by trauma in Baltimore City."

I believe that the county I live in, Prince George's County, would greatly benefit from a gun violence prevention and intervention program like the "Let's Thrive" program.

Victims of gun violence suffer shock trauma comparable to wounds suffered by our military. The trauma-related health care is specialized and expensive. Moreover, survivors of homicide victims deserve victim assistance, advocacy, and support as they deal with their grief and trauma from the loss of their loved ones.

As Unitarian Universalists, we believe that we have a moral duty to provide for public safety. Let us act together in Love.  
We urge a favorable report for **House Bill 387**.

*Ken Shilling*

Ken Shilling, Gun Violence Prevention Lead Advocate