

**TO: Chairman Vanessa Atterbeary and members of the House Ways and Means Committee**

**SUBJECT: House Bill 387 - The *Comprehensive Community Safety Funding Act***

**DATE: February 11, 2025**

I am Richard Eaton, a current resident of Bethesda in Montgomery County Maryland. I wish to submit the following testimony in support of passage of House Bill 387, *The Comprehensive Community Safety Funding Act*.

I lived in Baltimore for 4 years while attending Johns Hopkins University, where I received my B.A. degree in political science in 1970. Baltimore is a great city. However, while living in Baltimore I had safety concerns about gun violence. I believe that Baltimore can be made even safer through passage of House Bill 387.

For example, Baltimore has implemented the program *Safe Streets Baltimore*. *Safe Streets Baltimore* seeks to reduce gun violence through various violence intervention activities and programs. According to a recent report from the Center for Gun Violence Solutions at The Johns Hopkins University School of Public Health, significant progress has been made in reducing gun violence in a number of Baltimore neighborhoods as a result of these programs.

To remain successful, programs intended to reduce gun violence must continue to be adequately funded. The revenue provided by the excise tax in H.B.387 will serve a number of programs which seek to reduce the incidence of gun violence.

*The Comprehensive Community Safety Funding Act* will distribute excise tax revenue to, for example, The Center for Firearm Violence Prevention within the Maryland Department of Health, and the Maryland Violence Intervention and Prevention Program Fund.

Much more needs to be done to further reduce the scourge of gun violence in Maryland. The funding provided in House Bill 387 will build on past progress and is a helpful step in the right direction. I recommend passage of this bill.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

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