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TESTIMONY ON HB#/0387- POSITION: FAVORABLE

Comprehensive Community Safety Funding Act

TO: Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins, and members of the Ways & Means Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB#/0387, Comprehensive Community Safety Funding Act

This bill recognizes the impact gun violence has in Maryland and aims to ensure the sustained funding of effective programs dedicated to violence prevention and witness support. It will fund these programs by adding an excise tax on gun dealers to pay for any potential harm that firearms might inflict.

This bill will impose an excise tax on certain gross receipts of certain firearms dealers derived from the sales of firearms in the State and sales of firearms to residents of the State. It does NOT interfere with a second amendment right; it acknowledges a right of ownership of firearms but makes the seller responsible for assisting Maryland in mitigation of harms which may occur from the possession of a firearm.

The statistics on gun violence in Maryland show how guns are used in suicides in Maryland: ¹

GUN SUICIDES AND SUICIDE ATTEMPTS Every year, an average of 276 people in Maryland die by gun suicides and 24 are wounded by gun suicide attempts—a rate of 4.2 suicides and 0.4 suicide attempts per 100,000 people. Maryland has the 43rd-highest rate of gun suicides and gun suicide attempts in the US.

This bill will put Maryland at the forefront of having funding for significant programs to tackle the problems from misuse of firearms. These funds will help support The Center for Firearm Violence & Intervention, Maryland Violence Intervention and Prevention Program, Maryland Trauma Physicians Service Fund, and Survivors of Homicide Victims Grant Program. ²

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on HB#/0387.

¹ <https://everystat.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Gun-Violence-in-Maryland-2024-05.pdf>

² <https://mdpgv.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Comprehensive-Community-Safety-Funding-Act-Fact-Sheet.pdf>