



Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

Testimony in Support of SB 118 - Comprehensive Community Safety Funding Act

To: Chair Guzzone, Vice-Chair Rosapepe, and
Members of the Budget and Taxation Committee;
From: Deborah Lattimer, MSSW, MPH, Lead Advocate, Gun Violence Prevention
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland.
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As Unitarian Universalists, our shared values of interdependence, pluralism, justice, and equity, centered around our core value of love, all require us to care about and for each other. These values compel us to challenge harmful systems and work to create a world where everyone can flourish. While in support of responsible gun ownership, U.U.s have long advocated for common-sense gun laws which can help save lives. For this reason, we ask you to support **SB 118 - Comprehensive Community Safety Funding Act**.

SB 118 proposes an 11% excise tax on gross receipts from firearm, ammunition, and certain accessory sales in Maryland, similar to the federal Pittman-Robertson tax. This tax targets industry profits, not consumers, and will be collected by the state. By redirecting firearm-related profits, the bill aims to address the public health and financial burdens of gun violence, providing a sustainable solution for improving community safety.

Our communities need violence prevention and intervention programs to reduce the impact of gun violence. We need to fund a holistic approach to address, intervene, and prevent gun violence. According to the Maryland Department of Health's report from 2024, our firearm death rate has fallen 24% and the homicide rate has fallen 36% since 2021. Researchers have attributed the drops in gun violence to investments made in communities through federal funds, which no longer exist. Maryland needs to replace the funds that will support effective community-based violence prevention and intervention initiatives, and this puts on responsibility on the firearm industry.

Let us prioritize the people of Maryland over industry profits.
We urge a favorable report for **Senate Bill 118**.

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