



Written Testimony of Tarria Stanley
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Senate Bill 0118, Community Safety Funding Act
House Ways and Means Committee
February 13, 2025

Members of the Esteemed Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Tarria Stanley, and I am here on behalf of Community Justice, a national organization that advocates for gun violence prevention by empowering those closest to the pain to advance lifesaving solutions.

Gun violence remains one of the most pressing issues in Maryland, with devastating impacts on individuals, families, and entire communities. According to Johns Hopkins University, firearm access is associated with increased suicide, homicide, and unintentional deaths and injuries. Each year, Maryland experiences roughly 799 deaths and 1,765 injuries due to gun violence, costing the state more than \$10.5 billion annually. These are not just statistics — they represent real lives, real families, and communities carrying long-term trauma.

Senate Bill 0118 offers an innovative solution. By establishing a firearm excise tax, the Comprehensive Community Safety Funding Act would generate sustainable funding to support critical community safety initiatives across Maryland.

Programs like community violence intervention are proven to reduce violence by focusing on prevention, engagement, and healing. After the passage of the American Rescue Plan Act in 2021, cities across the country used federal resources to expand violence prevention efforts. However, as those federal funds are being stripped away, the urgency for states like Maryland to step up has never been greater. We know that when funding is lost, lives are lost. This bill recognizes that protecting human life requires investment, and asks the firearm industry to help bear that cost and not communities impacted.

Baltimore shows what is possible when we invest in these strategies. In 2025, the city saw a 30 percent decline in homicides, driven in part by the Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement's collaborative violence reduction strategy.

Senate Bill 0118 would help sustain and expand these life-saving efforts across the state. Community Justice strongly urges the committee to advance this legislation.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.