



**BILL NO:** Senate Bill 20  
**TITLE:** Family and Law Enforcement Protection Act  
**COMMITTEE:** Judicial Proceedings  
**HEARING DATE:** January 20, 2026  
**POSITION:** Favorable

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The Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence (MNADV) is the state domestic violence coalition that works to lead diverse community partners toward the common purpose of reducing the occurrence and impact of intimate partner violence.. **MNADV urges the COMMITTEE to favorably report on SB 20.**

Senate Bill 20 is the result of the work of a workgroup comprised of organizations whose mission it is to reduce gun violence, and of which the MNADV was a member. Marylanders to Prevent Gun Violence and the workgroup issued a White Paper in late 2024 about gun violence and domestic violence.<sup>1</sup> From that work this bill arose. SB 20 is an attempt to provide guidance to the courts and law enforcement on how to hold protection order respondents accountable to surrender their firearms if a protection order is issued against them. The White Paper is replete with data that shows that the link between domestic violence and guns is quite literally, deadly.

There are three major components to SB 20. First, our protection order law (MD. Code Ann. FL Section 4-501 et seq.) already requires the mandatory surrender of firearms upon the grant of a final protection order. SB 20 would expand that to a mandatory surrender of firearms at the temporary protection order phase if court grants the order.

Second, Senate Bill 20 creates a list of questions on the petition for protection from abuse. It is an expansive set of questions, and we laud the goal of learning everything possible about a respondent and his gun ownership, as well as reinforcing that the courts must take their responsibility to have respondents surrender guns seriously and ask *every* petitioner about guns. However, we do have a concern that the extensive list of questions will look and seem overwhelming to petitioners. We fear the result will be petitioners giving up before they finish filling out the petition for protection, or in the alternative just saying “no, he/she has no guns”

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<sup>1</sup> [https://mdpgv.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/A-Safe-Haven\\_Policy-Paper-November-2024-.pdf](https://mdpgv.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/A-Safe-Haven_Policy-Paper-November-2024-.pdf)



instead of having to fill in all the answers. We support proposed amendments that lessen the number of questions. Even a shorter list of questions would appropriately protect survivors' privacy and would not be so overwhelming as to discourage petitioners from filing for protection from domestic abuse. In our experience, petitioners will not have the amount of information seeking to be gathered by these questions. The fundamental question is does he/she have guns? If so, do you know where they are or where he/she keeps them?

We also support a policy requiring appropriate referral, which should be to the domestic violence service provider in their jurisdiction. Some jurisdictions do this in the ordinary course in temporary protection order hearings, which are almost always ex parte.

The third component of SB 20 creates accountability for the respondent to comply with a court order and surrender their guns. It has timing requirements and well as requirements that the respondent certify to the court that he/she has surrendered their guns. It creates a mechanism to hold respondents accountable if they fail to surrender their guns within a certain amount of time and gives law enforcement or prosecutors power to pursue the surrender of the guns. The efforts to hold respondents accountable vary across jurisdictions, but **all petitioners deserve safety, and one of the most important ways to achieve that safety is removal of firearms from those who pose danger to the petitioner.**

Attached to our testimony are charts with statistics about domestic violence homicides in Maryland from 2019-2023. From 2019-2023, of the 237 domestic violence homicides on our state, 75% were with the use of a gun.

For the above stated reasons, the **Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence urges a favorable report on SB 20.**