

DALYA ATTAR
Legislative District 41
Baltimore City

Education, Energy, and the
Environment Committee
Education Subcommittee



James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 122
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3697
800-492-7122 Ext. 3697
Dalya.Attar@senate.state.md.us

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Senator Attar's Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 362 - Criminal Law - Child's Access to Firearms – Penalty (Ny'kala Strawder Act)

February 11, 2026

Chair Smith, Vice-Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

Thank you for your consideration of Senate Bill 362 - *Criminal Law – Child's Access to Firearms – Penalty*, also known as the Ny'kala Strawder Act. This bill seeks to address a critical issue in our community by strengthening penalties for individuals who fail to properly secure firearms, preventing minors from gaining unsupervised access. This legislation is named in memory of Ny'kala Strawder, a 15-year-old who tragically lost her life a few years ago due to a firearm that was left unsecured. In the wake of recent tragic incidents, this bill aims to improve public safety by ensuring that those who negligently leave firearms accessible to children are held accountable.

Currently, Maryland law allows only a fine as a penalty for individuals who store or leave a loaded firearm in a location where a minor could access it without supervision. However, this penalty has proven insufficient, especially given the catastrophic consequences of such negligence. Tragically, incidents like the accidental death of Nykayla Strawder and the death of a 9-year-old in my district highlight the urgency of addressing this issue more effectively. These tragedies are preventable, and we must take action to strengthen our laws to protect children from easily accessing firearms.

Senate Bill 362 increases the penalties for individuals who fail to secure firearms from only a fine of up to \$1,000 to include a penalty of up to five years in prison. This bill aims to ensure that those who knowingly or negligently allow minors to gain unsupervised access to firearms are held criminally accountable.

This bill has several exemptions: it will not apply if a minor's access to a firearm is supervised by an adult, if the firearm was obtained because of unlawful entry, if the firearm is in the possession or control of a law enforcement officer while the officer is engaged in official duties, or if the minor holds a certificate of firearm and hunter safety. These exemptions ensure that the bill does not penalize responsible gun owners who follow safe practices and guidelines.

The Ny'kala Strawder Act honors the memory of a young life lost, and I believe it will help prevent future tragedies by sending a strong message about the importance of securing firearms. This

legislation is a critical step toward safeguarding the most vulnerable members of our society – our children.

I urge the committee to stand with Ny’kala’s family, and with the countless Maryland families who are counting on us to make this necessary change to our law. I respectfully ask for your support in passing this important legislation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Dalya", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Senator Dalya Attar