



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

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.¹ 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”

¹ https://mdpgv.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/A-Safe-Haven_Policy-Paper-November-2024-.pdf

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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?

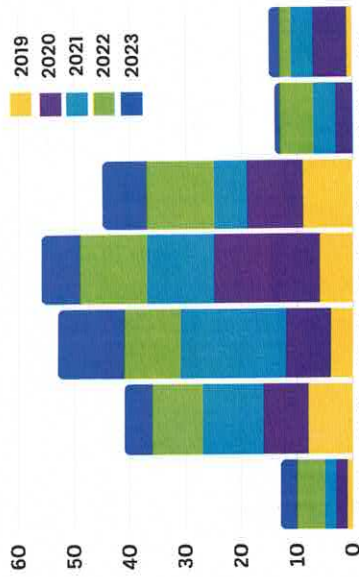
We also support a policy requiring appropriate referral, which should be to the domestic violence service provider in their jurisdiction. Some jurisdictions do this in the ordinary course in temporary protection order hearings, which are almost always ex parte.

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.**

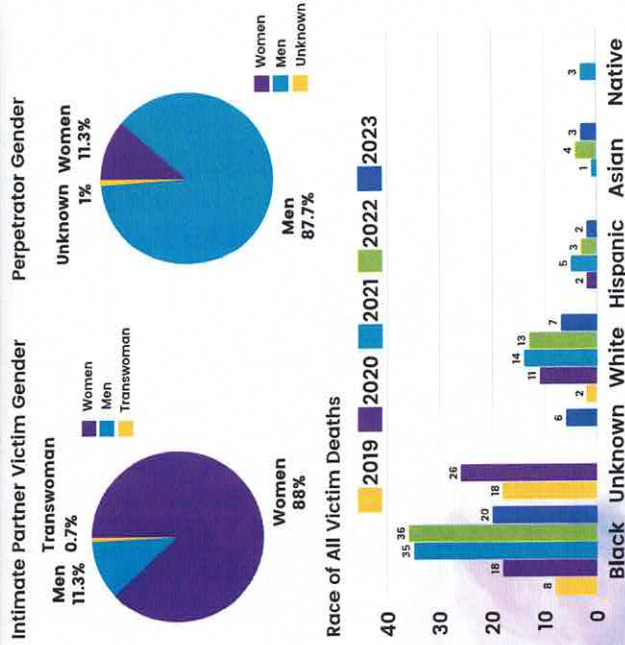
Attached to our testimony are charts with statistics about domestic violence homicides in Maryland from 2019-2023. From 2019-2023, of the 237 domestic violence homicides on our state, 75% were with the use of a gun.

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

Age of Death



Gender and Racial Disparity



In the past 5 years,
237 Marylanders
lost their lives to domestic violence

Deaths by Category

YEARS	Bystander	Victim	Perpetrator	Unknown	DEATHS
2019	3	20	6	0	29
2020	3	38	11	4	56
2021	7	38	13	0	58
2022	16	27	13	0	56
2023	11	19	7	1	38
Total	40	142	50	5	237

This trifold was developed using information provided by the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence (MNADV) through their tracking and verification efforts. MNADV collects and analyzes data on intimate partner violence homicides in Maryland annually to raise awareness and guide prevention initiatives. For further information about the data, please contact MNADV.



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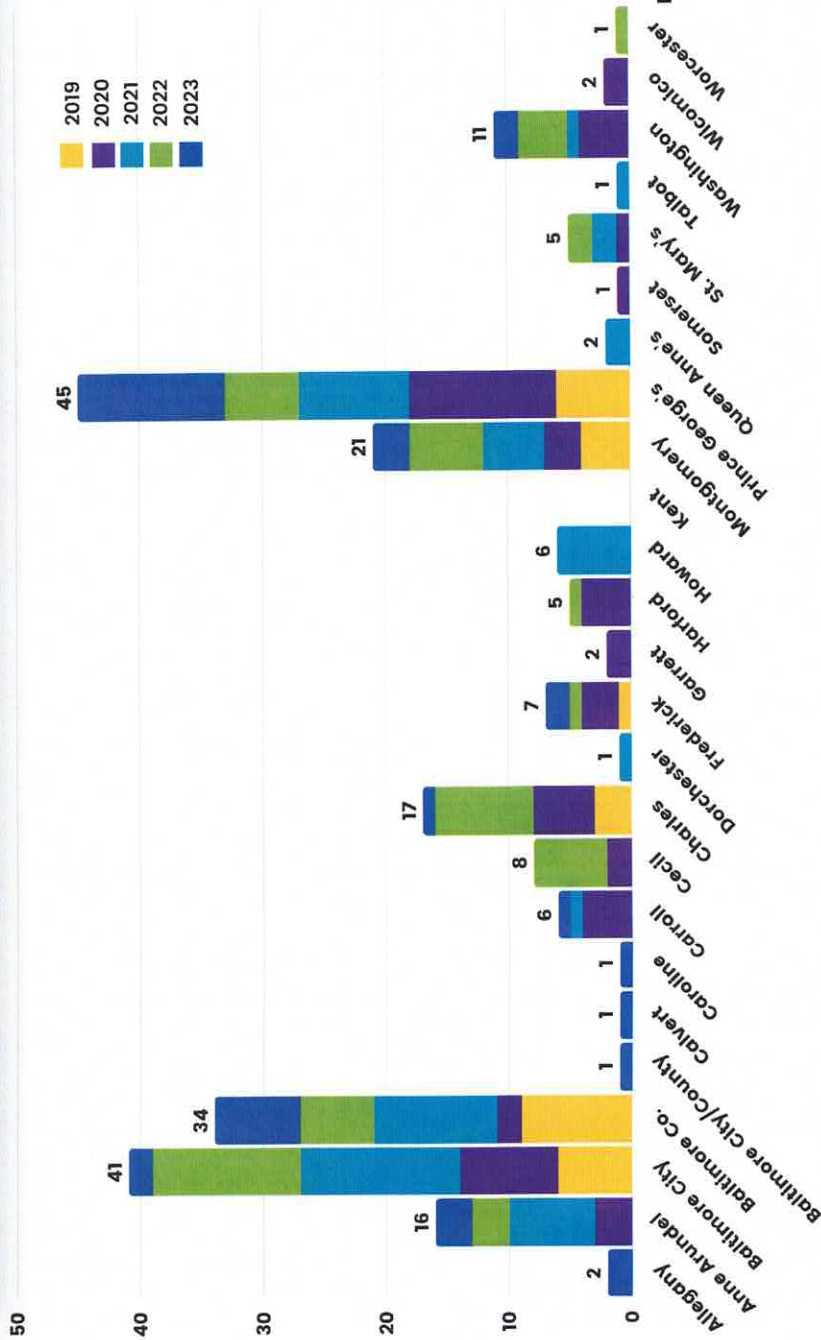


Five Years of IPV Homicides in Maryland: Key Trends, Risk Factors, and Insights

In Remembrance of the Lives Lost to
Domestic Violence in Maryland
January 1st, 2019 - December 31st, 2023

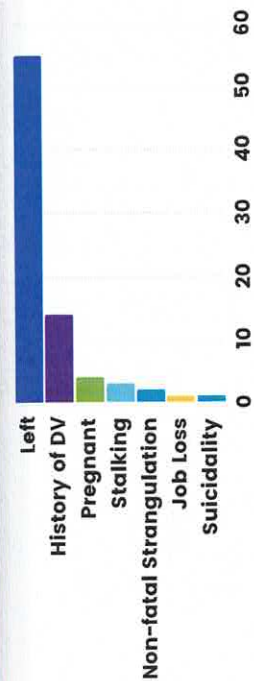


Maryland Domestic Violence Deaths by Jurisdiction



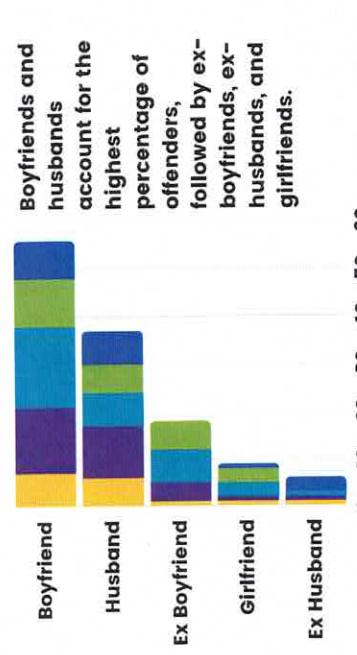
Primary Lethality Factors

Of the 78 deaths with known lethality factors, 69% of those included people who had left the relationship already, 18% of the deaths had a perpetrator with a criminal or civil history of DV, and the remaining 14% involved non-fatal strangulation, pregnancy, stalking, job loss, or suicidality.



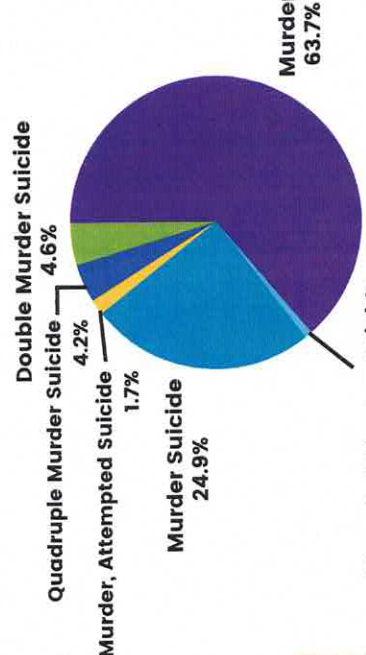
Understanding the Perpetrators

Offender Relationship (Top 5)



Boyfriends and husbands account for the highest percentage of offenders, followed by ex-boyfriends, ex-girlfriends, and ex-husbands.

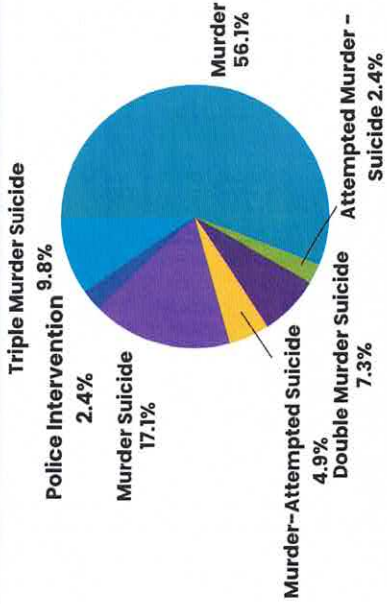
Murder Suicides



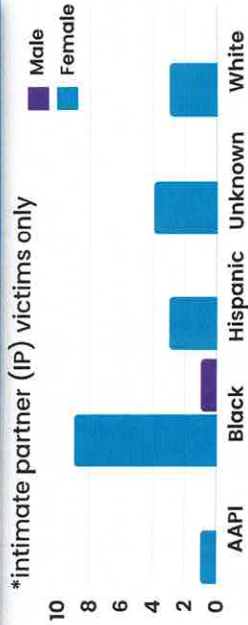
36% of IPV homicides in Maryland resulted in an attempted or completed suicide by the perpetrator.

75% all IPV-related deaths

Murder-Suicides

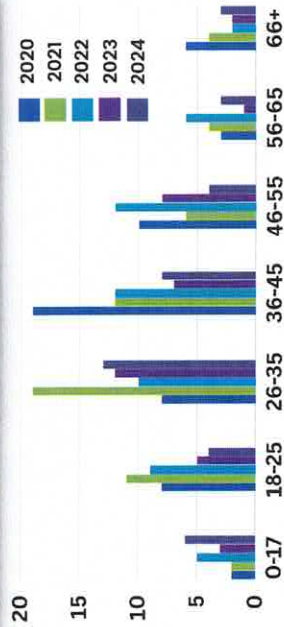


Race & Gender



In 2024 in Maryland, intimate partner homicide remains a deeply gendered issue—95% of IP victims were women. In addition, Black women made up nearly 30% of IP victims this year and 36% over the last decade.

Age of Death



In the year of 2024,

41 Marylanders

lost their lives to domestic violence

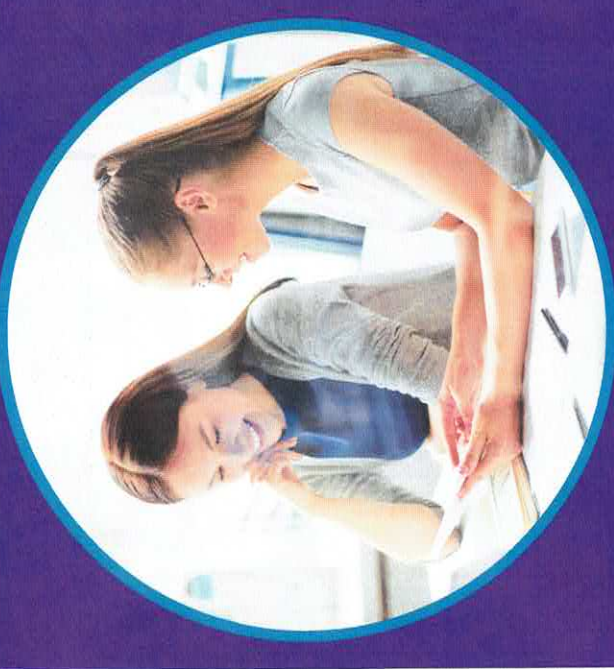
Deaths by Category

YEARS	Victim Deaths		Homicides *Pending Legal Action	Abusive Partner Deaths	DEATHS	
	ADULTS	CHILDREN				TOTAL
2024	26	6	32	2*	7	41
2023	27	3	30	1*	7	38
2022	35	5	40	3*	13	56
2021	40	2	42	3*	13	58
2020	40	1	41	4*	11	56



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2024 Intimate Partner Violence Homicide Data



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Maryland Domestic Violence Deaths by Jurisdiction

*Empty Boxes reflect Zero Deaths for the counties that year
 **Attempted murder in Prince Georges; Suicide completed in Montgomery

MD Counties	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Allegany				2	
Anne Arundel	3	7	3	3	1
Baltimore Co.	2	10	6	7	3
Baltimore City	8	13	12	3	4
Calvert				1	
Caroline				1	
Carroll	4	1		1	1
Cecil	2		6		1
Charles	5		8	1	
Dorchester		1			1
Frederick	3		1	2	3
Garrett	2				
Harford	4		1		1
Howard		6			9
Kent					
Montgomery	3	5	6	3	2**
Prince George's	12	9	6	12	11
Queen Anne's		2			
Somerset	1				
St. Mary's	1	2	2		3
Talbot		1			
Washington	4	1	4	2	
Wicomico	2				1
Worcester			1		
TOTAL	56	58	56	38	41

32 victims of Domestic Violence were killed in 2024.

Age Range: 1.5 years to 73 years old

21 Intimate Partners Died

- 4** Women were killed by their husband
- 3** Women were killed by their estranged or ex-husband
- 12** Women were killed by their boyfriend
- 2** Women were killed by their ex-boyfriend

11 Bystanders Died

- 5** People were killed by their father (4 children, 1 adult)
- 1** Adult was killed by a relative in relation to an IPV incident
- 4** People were killed (3 adults, 1 child) by someone with no relation to them
- 1** Child was killed by their parent's partner

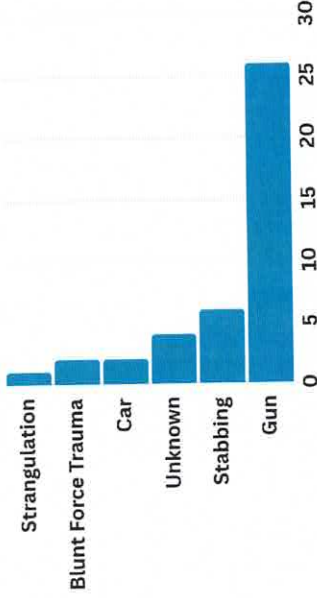
2 People lost their life due to unknown intimate partner violence dynamics. *Details of cases are unknown due to pending legal action

7 Abusive Partners Died

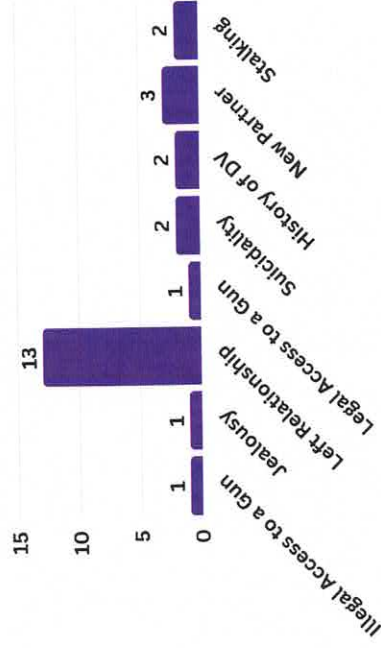
- 6** Men committed suicide within the context of a murder-suicide
- 1** Man died due to police intervention

63% of the deaths were caused by a gun

Method Used in Homicide:



Lethality Factors



In 2024, leaving the relationship was identified in 41% of Maryland's IPV homicide cases, highlighting the heightened danger survivors face during separation.

*Lethality factors predict the risk of a partner killing or severely harming someone in an abusive relationship. They are counted based on known case details and may not reflect all circumstances.