



Everytown for Gun Safety Testimony in Support of SB0020 (Family & Law Enforcement Protection Act)

January 16, 2026

Chair Smith and Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee:

I submit this written testimony on behalf of Everytown for Gun Safety, where I am Counsel for state legislative advocacy. Everytown strongly supports SB 0020 and requests a favorable report.

SB 0020 would strengthen Maryland's Protective Order process by ensuring people who are subjects of protective orders do not have access to firearms from the onset of a domestic violence case. This bill will better protect victims by providing law enforcement with additional knowledge of the existence of firearms in the home and the authority to execute search warrants when firearms are not surrendered. By strengthening existing law to make sure that firearms are kept out of the hands of domestic abusers when their victims first seek protection from a court through an interim or temporary protective order, victims will be better protected in the extremely dangerous days immediately following the filing for a protective order. The bill would also take steps to improve the implementation of firearm surrender requirements for protective orders by ensuring courts give clear and specific guidance to respondents.

Access to a gun in a domestic violence situation makes it five times more likely that a woman involved in that situation will be killed.¹ 75% of domestic violence fatalities in Maryland were committed with a gun in 2022.² Domestic violence disproportionately affects Black women in Maryland; they are killed at a rate nearly four times greater than their proportion within Maryland's population. Nationally, women in the US are 28 times more likely to die by firearm homicide than women in other high-income countries,³ and nearly 7 in 10 women killed by an intimate partner in the US are killed with a gun.⁴

State laws that discourage or prohibit individuals subject to domestic violence-related restraining orders from possessing firearms and also require them to relinquish their firearms are associated with a 14 to 16 percent lower intimate partner firearm homicide rate.⁵ When states

¹ Jacquelyn C. Campbell et al., "Risk Factors for Femicide in Abusive Relationships: Results From a Multisite Case Control Study," *American Journal of Public Health* 93, no. 7 (July 2003): 1089–97, <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.93.7.1089>.

² Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence, "2022-2023 DVFRSIT Report," 2024, <https://bit.ly/4hezNt8>.

³ Everytown Research analysis of the most recent year of gun deaths by country (2015 to 2019), GunPolicy.org (accessed January 7, 2022).

⁴ Everytown Research analysis of CDC, National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS), Average: 2020–2022. Analysis includes firearm homicides involving an intimate partner and women 18 years and older.

⁵ April M. Zeoli et al., "Analysis of the Strength of Legal Firearms Restrictions for Perpetrators of Domestic Violence and Their Associations with Intimate Partner Homicide," *American Journal of Epidemiology* 187, no. 11 (November 2018): 2365–71, <https://doi.org/10.1093/aje/kwy174>. See



broaden their firearm prohibition laws beyond federal law to cover dating partners, as well as when firearm possession is prohibited at the initial stage of proceedings, the states were found to experience a 13 percent reduction in intimate partner homicide and a 16 percent reduction in intimate partner firearm homicide rate.⁶

The days immediately following the filing of a restraining order are extremely dangerous for a person suffering abuse. According to one study, 18 percent of women who were killed by an intimate partner and had restraining orders were killed within two days of the order being issued, and 36 percent were killed within a month.⁷ Studies show that laws requiring domestic abusers to relinquish firearms save lives.

This bill will help protect victims during a critical, vulnerable period, it will give law enforcement the tools it needs to protect themselves and victims in domestic violence situations, and it will save lives in Maryland.

On behalf of Everytown for Gun Safety, I request a favorable report.

Mary Kenah
Everytown for Gun Safety

also: Carolina Diez et al., "State Intimate Partner Violence-Related Firearm Laws and Intimate Partner Homicide Rates in the United States, 1991 to 2015," *Annals of Internal Medicine* 167, no. 8 (October 2017): 536-43, <https://doi.org/10.7326/M16-2849>

⁶ April M. Zeoli et al., "Analysis of the Strength of Legal Firearms Restrictions for Perpetrators of Domestic Violence and Their Associations with Intimate Partner Homicide," *American Journal of Epidemiology* 187, no. 11 (November 2018): 2365-71, <https://doi.org/10.1093/aje/kwy174>.

⁷ Katherine A. Vittes and Susan B. Sorenson, "Restraining Orders Among Victims of Intimate Partner Homicide," *Injury Prevention* 14, no. 3 (2008): 191-5, <https://doi.org/10.1136/ip.2007.017947>.