



## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Meena Seshamani, M.D., Ph.D., Secretary

March 12, 2026

The Honorable J. Sandy Bartlett  
Chair, House Judiciary Committee  
101 Taylor House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

### **Re: House Bill 1541 – Workgroup to Study Extreme Risk Protective Orders (Sagar Ghimire Act) – Letter of Opposition**

Dear Chair Bartlett and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (the Department) respectfully submits this letter of opposition for House Bill (HB) 1541 – Workgroup to Study Extreme Risk Protective Orders (Sagar Ghimire Act). The bill would create a Workgroup chaired by the Secretary of Health or her designee and staffed by the Department. The Department would also be required to submit a report with its findings on or before May 1, 2027.

An Extreme Risk Protective Order (ERPO) is a court-issued civil order temporarily requiring a person to not purchase and surrender any firearms, if it is believed that person is at risk of hurting themselves or others. The Department appreciates the intent of this legislation to examine how the use of ERPOs can be improved. However, the bill duplicates existing efforts to increase awareness of ERPOs by the Governor’s Commission (Commission) on Suicide Prevention, the Office of Suicide Prevention within the Behavioral Health Administration and the Suicide Fatality Review Committee (Committee). The Commission’s 2022-2024 Suicide Prevention Plan includes a priority goal to “promote and strengthen lethal means safety for at-risk individuals” and an action item to “promote awareness and appropriate use of Maryland’s Extreme Risk Protective Order (ERPO/Red Flag) law.”<sup>1</sup> The Committee’s Annual Report also includes information and recommendations related to suicide prevention, including ERPOs. Apart from State efforts, research is already being conducted in Maryland related to ERPO awareness and implementation: for example, the Center for Gun Policy Research published an article indicating that the majority of Maryland physicians are interested in implementing ERPO, but report concerns about administrative burden and have indicated interest in having

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<sup>1</sup> Governor’s Commission on Suicide Prevention. (2022). Maryland’s State Suicide Prevention Plan, 2022-2024. <https://health.maryland.gov/bha/suicideprevention/SiteAssets/Lists/Accordion/NewForm/Maryland%20Suicide%20Prevention%20Clean%20Formatted%20plan%20%20-%2010.25.2022.docx.pdf>

navigators/coordinators to support them.<sup>2</sup> The Center for Gun Policy Research also collaborated with Marylanders to Prevent Gun Violence (MDPGV) published *A Roadmap For Safety: New Policies to Reduce Gun Violence in Maryland* in February 2026 which included a recommendation to “improve Extreme Risk Protective Order (ERPO) implementation.”<sup>3</sup> MDPGV also hosts an ERPO Advisory Board, on which the Department’s Behavioral Health Administration team serves. The board comprises leaders from law enforcement, community organizations, courts, legal services, victim advocacy, and public health. This board reviews and provides feedback on outreach and training materials, identifies best practices for ERPO implementation, and ensures that MDPGV’s work reflects real-world challenges and opportunities across jurisdictions.

Given the extensive existing work on ERPO in Maryland, the workgroup proposed by HB 1541 would likely duplicate efforts, introduce additional administrative burden, and lack the authority or funds to implement recommendations. If enacted as drafted, the Department will need to hire at least one additional staff member to oversee the Workgroup. Responsibilities of the additional employee would include organizing the workgroup, facilitating the meetings, gathering requested data and other information to inform recommendations, and overseeing the reporting requirements.

If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Meghan Lynch, Director of Governmental Affairs at [Meghan.Lynch@maryland.gov](mailto:Meghan.Lynch@maryland.gov).

Sincerely,



Meena Seshamani, M.D., Ph.D.  
Secretary of Health

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<sup>2</sup> Frattaroli S, Hoops K, Irvin NA, et al. Assessment of Physician Self-reported Knowledge and Use of Maryland’s Extreme Risk Protection Order Law. *JAMA Netw Open*. 2019;2(12):e1918037. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2019.18037

<sup>3</sup> Bartlett E, Anderman A, Herren K, Roskam K. (2026). “Policies to Reduce Gun Violence in Maryland: Research, Policy Analysis, and Recommendations.” Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions and Marylanders to Prevent Gun Violence.