



Dear Delegate Bartlett, Vice-Chair Davis, and esteemed members of the House Judiciary Committee.

My name is Nayla Jimenez, and I am an active member of Team ENOUGH Howard County, a school-specific arm of Team ENOUGH Baltimore. We are a youth-led organization dedicated to gun violence prevention. I am here today to share my story and my support for HB 0083, the Family and Law Enforcement Protection Act.

The Family and Law Enforcement Protection Act requires the immediate surrender of all firearms and handguns when a protective order is issued. When a protective order is issued, there is an interim, temporary, and permanent stage during which an abuser needs to turn in their guns. These stages can take up to six months to take effect. During this time, abuse and aggression can escalate and can lead to an altercation in which a firearm is used. Family and Law Enforcement Protection act ensures that there is no time for an abuser to take action on their emotions.

Growing up, I always knew that my father was an alcoholic, but it wasn't until I was fifteen that I began to feel the consequences of his disease. For context, my father is an immigrant from the Dominican Republic; he grew up in a house where he was not loved or taken care of. These traits can be seen in him today. The symptoms of his alcoholism started

small, like sleeping throughout the day or being agitated over small things. As it progressed, it became abusive in both verbal and physical ways. My mother and I would be screamed at, called names, and accused of trying to harm our family. He would think that my mom was having an affair, and he would take all of our electronics to make sure she wasn't. The physical side started with him getting angry and punching holes in the walls and breaking furniture. One day, I remember he got so angry with my mother that when she tried to walk away from him, he grabbed her by the scarf and started to choke her.

Being in a house where abuse was an everyday thing, the only comfort I could hold on to was the fact that there wasn't a firearm in my home. This quickly changed. One day, on my way to school, my father pulled off to the side of the road and said he needed to show me something. He then pulled out a briefcase and told me to open it. Inside the briefcase, there was a gun. All of the safety that I was feeling vanished knowing that someone as violent as my father was now in possession of a handgun.

Being put into this situation made me question my safety every day, knowing that I had to walk on eggshells every day, fearing that something would make him snap and get violent. I would have to lie about things to him and even agree with the horrible things he was telling me in order to calm him down. Luckily, my father sought the help he needed, and the abuse stopped. We never sought any action because we knew that this would make our situation worse. If it continued and we did go through with filing a protective order, I can only imagine how he would have lashed out in those first twenty-four to forty eight hours. I believe that he would have taken extreme measures out of anger, and the Family and Law Enforcement Protection Act would have provided the safety to my family to live our lives without the fear of losing our lives. I can't tell my story without thinking about the many other families who are going through the same thing right now. The children in those houses are scared that someone who they thought was supposed to be their protector is now the one putting them in danger. The Family and Law Enforcement Protection Act would protect those families and ensure that they won't have to be constantly looking over their shoulder, fearing for their lives.