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**DATE:** March 9, 2026

**BILL NUMBER:** HB 1123

**POSITION:** Favorable

On behalf of the Maryland State's Attorneys' Association (MSAA), we are writing to express full support for HB 1123, Criminal Law - Minor's Access to Firearms – Penalty. This legislation is crucial to holding those accountable who fail to store their loaded firearms in a safe location, and out of the reach of children.

A five (5) year criminal penalty, as outlined in HB 1123, is a significant step forward in ensuring accountability and justice within Maryland's legal system. Currently, the penalty for a violation of CR §4-104 Minor's Access to a Firearm is capped at a fine of \$1000. The existing penalty is wholly insufficient in holding offenders accountable and ensuring the safety of our children, such as the beautifully innocent life taken from us far too soon, young Ny'Kala Strawder.

As currently written, "Access to a Minor" under CR §4-104 is only a fineable offense, clearly insufficient in light of the tragic events that transpired as a result of Ms. April Gaskins' behavior which led to the untimely death and an unimaginable loss for the Strawder family. It is too late to save Ny'Kala, but it is not too late to honor her life and prevent future tragedies caused by the unlawful access of firearms by children.

With the recent increase in firearm proliferation in Maryland and violence in our schools, by enacting HB 1123, we can demonstrate our commitment to the safety of our children by providing a sufficient penalty and deterrent for leaving loaded weapons within the reach of our children.

In conclusion, we urge you to support HB 1123 and advocate for its passage. Let us seize this opportunity to ensure that our legal system reflects our values and our commitment to the safety of our children.

MSAA urges a favorable report for HB 1123.