



MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC CLUB

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**House Bill 83 Family and Law Enforcement Protection Act
Judiciary Committee – January 29, 2026
SUPPORT**

Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony concerning an important priority of the **Montgomery County Women's Democratic Club (WDC)** for the 2026 legislative session. We are one of Maryland's most active Democratic clubs with hundreds of engaged, politically active members, including many elected officials. We write in support of **HB 83 Family and Law Enforcement Protection Act**, which will close a dangerous loophole in current law.

The safety of women and children is a long-standing priority of WDC. The current law, allows abusers, at a judge's discretion, to maintain possession of firearms while under a temporary protective order. HB 83 will significantly enhance the personal safety of the victims of domestic abuse by closing this loophole.

Data shows clearly that the majority of domestic violence victims are women and that their children are also at great risk¹. Marylanders to Prevent Gun Violence issued a White Paper in late 2024 that documents the deadly link between domestic violence and guns. Research also shows that the time of separating from the abuser is often the most dangerous time for a victim.

While current law (MD. Code Ann. FL Section 4-501 et seq.) requires the mandatory surrender of firearms upon the grant of a final protection order, this same requirement does not exist for temporary protective orders, which may precede a permanent order often by a week or more. Instead, a judge issuing the temporary protective order has discretion in whether to require the abuser to the surrender his firearm. **In other words, while under a temporary protective order, a domestic abuser in Maryland is currently entitled to maintain possession of his or her firearm.**

We believe that this element of judicial discretion is an unintentional loophole. HB 83 would close this loophole by requiring the judge, when issuing a temporary protective order, to also order the abuser to surrender his or her guns.

We ask for your support for HB 83 and strongly urge a favorable Committee report.

Cynthia Rubinstein
WDC President

Jim Montgomery
WDC The Basics Subcommittee

Kate Stein
WDC Advocacy Chair

Rachel Cintron
WDC The Basics Subcommittee

¹ Emory School of Medicine cites this at 81%, NIBRS (2016) reports that 71% of DV reports are from women, and Maryland Courts aggregated monthly data shows that in 2025, men were respondents in 72% of protective order cases