



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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

January 29, 2026

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

RE: House Bill 83 – Family and Law Enforcement Protection Act – Letter of Support

Dear Chair Bartlett and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of Health (MDH) respectfully submits this letter of support for House Bill (HB) 83 – Family and Law Enforcement Protection Act. House Bill 83 seeks to strengthen the implementation and compliance of firearm surrender after a domestic violence protective order (DVPO) has been issued.

Domestic violence is a public health crisis impacting communities all over Maryland, and the intersection of domestic violence and firearms is particularly deadly. In 2022, there were 64 domestic violence homicides, and more than half of them were committed with a firearm.¹ The impacts of domestic firearm violence can extend far into the community. More than two-thirds of all mass shootings started with a domestic violence incident or by a perpetrator with a history of domestic violence.²

Addressing domestic gun violence and intimate partner violence is key to the mission of MDH's new Center for Firearm Violence Prevention and Intervention (the Center). The Center was established in 2024 to reduce gun violence through a public health approach. House Bill 83 requires mandatory firearm prohibition and surrender to respondents with a temporary DVPO. Current law limits this mandatory prohibition to final protective orders. HB 83 also outlines a process and timeline for firearm surrender following the court's issuance of a DVPO.

The Department supports efforts to strengthen the firearm surrender process to protect families and the law enforcement officers from the escalation of violence during domestic violence cases.

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.

¹ WISQARS. (2022) National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS) <https://wisqars.cdc.gov/nvdrs/> Domestic violence includes: spouse or other intimate partner (current or ex), parent, child, other relative, and other intimate partner involvement.

² Geller, L.B., Booty, M. & Crifasi, C.K. (2021). The role of domestic violence in fatal mass shootings in the United States, 2014–2019. *Injury Epidemiology*.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Meena Seshamani".

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