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**TESTIMONY ON HB 197 (Cross-filed with SB 118)
Comprehensive Community Safety Funding Act
March 5, 2026**

The University of Maryland, Baltimore Center for Violence Prevention (CVP) strongly supports HB 197, which would ensure the sustained funding of effective programs dedicated to gun violence prevention and victim support. This bill proposes an 11% excise tax on gross receipts from firearm, ammunition, and certain accessory sales in Maryland, similar to the Federal Pittman-Robertson tax. By redirecting these firearm-related profits, this bill aims to address the public health and financial burdens of gun violence in our communities thus providing a sustainable solution for improving public safety.

The Center for Violence Prevention is a community informed initiative of the University of Maryland, Baltimore in collaboration with the R Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center at the University of Maryland Medical Center – the first of its kind. Our aim is to build resilient communities for all through the prevention and intervention of all forms of violence and trauma. We do this in an interdisciplinary, collaborative fashion where we conduct community-based participatory research, provide creative and impactful education, and inform and advocate for policies that strengthen our communities to prevent violence and trauma. Our support for this bill is aligned with the latter.

Excise taxes on firearm sales and are not new having been in effect in some way or form in the United States since 1919. These funds bring in at least one billion dollars in revenue annually. Other states that have implemented similar gun excise taxes to those proposed here in Maryland have not seen significant decreases in gun sales even when the tax is largely passed on to the consumers. Since this bill focuses primarily on firearms sales, the expected revenue would represent a substantial but proportionally smaller share of the excise tax total while offering significant funding to support gun violence prevention initiatives. Among those proposed to receive this support is the UMMS Shock Trauma Center, our partners in this work. As Maryland's primary trauma center, it plays a critical role in treating victims of gun violence, offering life saving care to patients regardless of their ability to pay. The center is accessible to ALL Maryland residents regardless of their socioeconomic status and ability to pay, providing statewide access to top tier trauma services. The Shock Trauma Center also provides preventive services for trauma and violence prevention. They and all of the initiative proposed to be supported by this legislation are dedicated to gun violence prevention and victim support.

For these reasons, the UMB Center for Violence Prevention supports HB 197 and respectfully encourages a favorable report.