

## HB 197 - Comprehensive Community Safety Funding Act

Position - Favorable

To the Honorable Chair and Members of the House Ways and Means Committee.

My name is Lesley Frost and I am the Chair of National Council of Jewish Women, Maryland State Policy Advocacy Committee (NCJW MD SPA) and I am writing to express strong support for HB 197 - Comprehensive Community Safety Funding Act.

The bill proposes an 11% excise tax on gross receipts from firearm sales in Maryland, similar to the federal Pittman-Robertson tax. This tax targets industry profits, not consumers, and will be collected by the state. By redirecting firearm-related profits, This groundbreaking Maryland legislation aims to address the public health and financial burdens of gun violence, and provide a sustainable funding solution for effective programs dedicated to gun violence prevention and victim support.

Gun violence costs Maryland \$10.5 billion annually, including \$383.9 million borne by taxpayers—an average of \$1,731 per resident. Additional funding is crucial to support prevention, intervention, and survivor support initiatives, reducing both the economic and societal impact of gun violence.

NCJW is the oldest Jewish grassroots organization in the USA and Jewish values tell us our collective responsibility is to not stand idly by while our neighbor's blood is shed. Our NCJW Resolutions also tell us to work for the "Expansion and enforcement of laws, policies, and programs that regulate firearms and ammunition, ban assault and other military- style weapons and accessories, and prevent gun violence and promote gun safety."

It is the position of NCJW MD SPA, representing 600 advocates statewide, that the Comprehensive Community Safety Funding Act fulfills our obligation to counter the dehumanization inherent in prioritizing profits at the expense of human life. We therefore, urge you to vote favorable on HB 197.

Sincerely,  
Lesley Frost  
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