

House Bill 197 - Comprehensive Community Safe Funding Act - Favorable

House Ways and Means Committee

March, 5, 2026

Dear Honorable Delegate Wilkins, Delegate Feldmark, and Members of the Committee,

I, Cynthia Sokolow of Ellicott City, MD, urge you to support HB 197, the Comprehensive Community Safe Funding Act.

Gun violence costs Marylanders \$10.5 billion each year. About \$1,700 per resident is paid by taxpayers. Unfortunately, our state has recently lost \$23 million in federal funding including over \$7 million for community violence intervention.

House Bill 197 will:

- 1) Impose an 11% excise tax on gross receipts of gun industry profits. Consumers will not be taxed.
- 2) Provide expected revenue from the Maryland Firearms industry of about \$51 million in one year to Maryland.
- 3) Targets firearms, related accessories and ammunition.
- 4) Would not apply to transactions until after July 2027.

Four states, California, Pennsylvania, Colorado and Washington have passed similar legislation. Federal excise taxes as well as taxes from nine states, have taxed the gun industry for decades, used to offset wildlife-related harm from hunting.

Local programs will benefit from this tax by receiving funding, including:

University of Maryland's Shock Trauma center in Baltimore
Maryland Violence Intervention and Prevention Program
Maryland Trauma Physicians Services Fund (medical care averages \$30,000 the first year after injury.)
Survivors of Homicide Victims Grant Program

Funds are needed more than ever to keep Maryland safe. Gun industry profits are not constitutionally protected, but the people of Maryland should be. Please vote in favor of HB 197. Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Sincerely,
Cynthia Sokolow, 21042