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2026 SESSION POSITION PAPER

BILL: House Bill 197 – Comprehensive Community Safety Funding Act
COMMITTEE: Ways and Means
POSITION: Letter of Support
BILL ANALYSIS: HB0197 would create an 11% excise tax on gross receipts from firearm sales in Maryland. This tax targets industry profits, not consumers, and will be collected by the state. The collected tax would be used to address the financial burdens of gun violence for medical care and victims' services, and to support violence prevention.

POSITION RATIONALE: The Anne Arundel County Department of Health strongly supports House Bill 197, the Comprehensive Community Safety Funding Act. This legislation will provide sustained, dedicated funding to support evidence-based violence prevention and intervention programs that are effective in reducing violence in our communities.

In 2025 in Maryland, there were 603 firearm-related fatalities, and 644 emergency department visits for non-fatal firearm injuries.¹ The medical care associated with firearm injuries is costly, averaging approximately \$30,000 in direct health care spending in the first year.² Trauma centers across Maryland report that firearm injuries often require intensive care, extended hospital stays, and specialized services, placing substantial strain on healthcare systems.³ Gun violence costs Maryland an average of \$1,731 per resident each year, for a total of \$10.5 billion annually.⁴

Anne Arundel County has seen that evidence-based violence prevention programs work. The Annapolis Eastport Cure Violence program has resulted in a 40% decrease in firearm-related incidents since

¹ Data Office (2026). *Firearm Violence Data Dashboard*. Maryland Department of Health. Maryland Firearm Violence Data Dashboard. <https://health.maryland.gov/dataoffice/mdh-dashboards/Pages/firearm-violence.aspx>. Accessed 2/26/26.

² Nealon, D. (2022). *The Business Case for Reducing Gun Violence*. Harvard Medical School. <https://hms.harvard.edu/news/business-case-reducing-gun-violence>. Accessed 2/26/26.

³ Comprehensive Community Safety Funding Act: Maryland Senate Committee on Ways and Means, 449 Session (2025) (Testimony of Johns Hopkins Medicine and Maryland Hospital Association).

⁴ Miller et al. (2022). *The Economic Cost of Gun Violence in America*. Everytown For Gun Safety. <https://everytownresearch.org/report/the-economic-cost-of-gun-violence/#costs-to-taxpayers-survivors-families-and-employers>. Accessed 2/26/26.

implementation.⁵ HB197 aims to ensure the sustained funding of effective programs dedicated to gun violence prevention, like Eastport Cure Violence, and victim support, which can also help prevent further violence.

For these reasons, Anne Arundel County respectfully urges a favorable report on House Bill 197.

⁵ Anne Arundel Department of Health. (2026). *Gun Violence Intervention Team Dashboard dataset*. <https://www.aahealth.org/gun-violence-intervention-team/gvit-data-dashboard>. Accessed 2/1/26.