

March 2, 2026

The Honorable Jheanelle K. Wilkins

Chair, House Ways and Means Committee

130 Taylor House Office Building

131 Taylor House Office Building

Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Letter of Support– House Bill 0197– Comprehensive Community Safety Funding Act

Dear Chair Wilkins and Committee Members:

The Greater Baltimore Committee supports House Bill 0197, which imposes an excise tax on gross receipts from firearms, ammunition and accessory sales and dedicates the revenues to community safety programs.

Grounded in the belief that every life has value, we are committed to advancing a dynamic and inclusive regional economy. Safe communities are foundational to that goal. By establishing a dedicated funding stream for violence prevention, intervention, healing and trauma care, this bill reinforces the conditions necessary for long term economic vitality and community wellbeing in Maryland.

In 2024, Maryland experienced 671 firearm deaths and 780 emergency department visits for non-fatal injuries. Data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention show that fatal firearm injuries cost, on average \$9,000 per patient. Notably, they found that the costs for ongoing treatment for survivors are exponentially higher. On average, survivors spend about \$2,500 more per month on healthcare the year after they are shot—representing a 400% increase compared to similar people who were not injured. Although these are national findings, the implications are relevant to the financial toll and burden taken on by Maryland’s healthcare systems and taxpayers. It is abundantly clear that when gun violence occurs, the consequences extend beyond the immediate incident and generate measurable public costs. A dedicated excise tax helps to offset those costs.

Maryland’s own data reflects the same patterns of economic pressure. Prior studies estimate that the direct, measurable costs of gun violence in Maryland exceed \$1.3 billion annually including healthcare, criminal justice response, employer losses and lost

income. While these figures are based on 2018 analysis, rising healthcare costs and inflation suggest that the total financial burden is likely even higher. And even then, these estimates do not fully capture the hard-to-measure effects, such as loss of business investment to our state, lower property values, neighborhood disinvestment and more. While these costs are substantial, there is evidence that progress is possible.

In recent years, Maryland has seen meaningful reductions in violent crime. Statewide, non-fatal shootings are down 28% compared to 2024 and homicides have declined by 44%. Baltimore City recorded 133 homicides in 2025, reaching a nearly 50-year low. This progress reflects intentional partnership across public agencies, community leaders, private sector partners, and concentrated investment in prevention and intervention strategies. Dedicated funding for community safety initiatives directed back into Maryland communities would help stabilize the ecosystem that has contributed to recent declines in violence while strengthening the infrastructure that supports survivors of gun violence and families of victims. The investment made through tax revenues is modest in comparison to the economic toll gun violence imposes on our state each year.

Strong, safe communities of choice for residents and businesses are foundational to both human dignity and economic vitality. It is from this lens that we view the Comprehensive Community Safety Funding Act as not only a moral commitment, but an economic one.

Thank you for your consideration in investing in community safety as a core component of the economic prosperity of our state.

In partnership,



Amber Scott Woodruff
Director of Strategy and Research
Greater Baltimore Committee