



Testimony of Layla Greten, Team ENOUGH
Support for HB 197 [FAV]
Before the Maryland House Ways & Means Committee
February 25, 2025

Dear Chair Wilkins, Vice Chair Feldmark, and esteemed members of the House Ways and Means Committee:

My name is Layla Greten. I am a high school student at Archbishop Spalding High School and the founder of a local Team ENOUGH chapter, a youth-led initiative under The Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence. I am writing to voice my support for HB 197. As the President of Team ENOUGH Baltimore, I lead nearly 50 students across Maryland and multiple school chapters, with a shared passion and commitment to gun violence prevention.

HB 197 allows Maryland to invest in the community organizations that do the most critical work. These programs keep families safe and protect those disproportionately harmed by gun violence: low-income and black and brown communities. Community Violence Intervention programs are [so effective](#) that they have reduced shootings by 60% and violent crimes by over 70%.

According to the 2022 data from the [Maryland State Police](#), there were 118,349 regulated firearm transactions. A 2020 [firearm market study](#) published in 2020, published conservative estimates for the average price of firearms (combined handguns and rifles) in Maryland at [\\$750](#). This would mean a total of more than \$88,761,750 in potential sales annually.

According to a study from UChicago, the elasticity of Massachusetts's firearm market, which is comparable to Maryland's, is somewhat low at almost -1. This means that demand will remain consistent, but there will be a marginal drop in sales. Therefore, assuming that the tax burden that the burden would be passed on to the consumers, sales would drop from 118,349 to 105,331, and overall expected revenue would drop to \$78,998,250.

With the new expected sales of 105,331, we can expect an excise tax revenue of about \$8,689,807. Community Violence Intervention investment shows savings of anywhere from [\\$17-\\$41 per \\$1 invested](#). With an investment of \$8,689,807 from the excise tax, we can expect to save Maryland anywhere from \$147,725,719 to \$356,282,087 in expenses. Maryland already spends [\\$9.1 billion annually](#) on the consequences of gun violence, with [737](#) firearm deaths a year and even more firearm injuries. Healthcare, law enforcement, judicial, and incarceration fees all



burden Maryland's economy and taxpayers. We have the opportunity to make cost-effective, economically positive legislation with instrumental potential to save lives.

Maryland has passed similar excise taxes on alcohol, tobacco, and other industries, and there is no evidence of any widespread closure of liquor stores. Although price increases can affect consumer behavior, there is no state or nationwide evidence that these taxes force businesses to shut down, regardless of whether they pass the tax to consumers or bear the burden themselves. Additionally, the firearm excise tax that exists nationwide was not linked to any business shutdown; in contrast, the firearm industry has only grown from then on.

Increased taxes on tobacco and alcohol actually have not actually shown [a link to increased illicit sales](#). Illicit trade is driven less by pricing and more by weak administrative policies. Furthermore, when compared to tobacco, alcohol sees even less of a relationship between taxation and an illegal market, due to the heavy and difficult-to-transport nature of alcohol, which can be paralleled to firearms.

The truth is, dealers do not make all of their profit from selling firearms. For many stores, cleaning supplies, range gear such as hearing protection and range bags, and optics, all items not affected by the excise tax, have the potential to make the highest margin of profits. High-margin services are what [gun dealers already rely on](#): gunsmithing, transfer fees, training classes, and training kits.

Furthermore, used guns, accessories, holsters, weapon lights, and ammunition have very high profit margin. Even label-branded merchandise has margins of over [100%](#) and Cerakote applications have profit margins of [400%](#). Therefore, if dealers did not want to pass on the tax to consumers, there is plenty of space to absorb it in the profits.

The true businesses shutting down we need to be worried about are small businesses affected by gun violence. In [Fells Point](#), a chef was forced to shut down three of his restaurants because of lost revenue from safety issues. Following three incidents of gun violence in Fells Point, his reservations dropped by anywhere from 85-97%, and his revenue by more than 50%. Downtown Baltimore has been losing businesses, leaving employees and residents without services. The Sheraton Hotel, Morton's Steakhouse, H&M, P.F. Chang's, and other, once thriving, Inner Harbor staples [have been forced to close](#).

HB 197 will support the work of law enforcement by reducing the potential violent crimes that they must respond to, in turn allowing law enforcement to divert time and resources towards other public safety matters.



Furthermore, retailers near mass shootings see an average revenue drop of about [19%](#), and a [neighborhood-level analysis](#) of U.S. cities correlated high levels of gun violence with fewer new business establishments, fewer jobs, and slower home value appreciation. Gun violence is costing these businesses so much, and investment in violence prevention programs can boost Maryland's economy and support communities.

HB 197 is funding the organizations that have the greatest impact and need it most. I strongly urge a favorable report on HB 197.

Signed,

Layla Greten
Founder and President, Team ENOUGH Baltimore