



Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland

Testimony in Support of HB 197- Family and Law Enforcement Protection Act

To: Delegate Wilkins, Chair, Delegate Feldmark, Vice-Chair,
And members of the Ways and Means Committee

From: Deborah Lattimer, MSSW, MPH, Lead Advocate, Gun Violence Prevention
Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry of Maryland.

Date: March 5, 2026

Unitarian Universalists recognize the need for safety from gun violence in domestic violence situations. We have a moral obligation and responsibility to lower the risk of gun violence to family members—and the risk can be greatest shortly after a protective order is issued. In Maryland, a gun is used in 74% of domestic violence deaths. That is why we support **HB 197- Family and Law Enforcement Protection Act**.

In order to protect the family members who are leaving:

- There must be standard procedures for the respondent to surrender firearms to law enforcement officials.
- The respondent must surrender firearms at the onset of the initial protective order.
- The respondent must refrain from possession of ANY firearm for the duration of the interim protective order.

HB 197 provides reasonable and standard measures to ensure that the respondent fully complies with the protective orders to surrender any and all firearms. The standards also authorize law enforcement authorities to search for firearms with probable cause and without the respondent's presence.

We urge you to vote for **HB 197**. We ask you to stand on the side of love and justice. We believe that these provisions will strengthen public safety in Maryland.

We urge a favorable report.

Thank you,

Deborah Lattimer

Gun Violence Prevention Lead Advocate