



HB 1629- Support Elizabeth Banach, Executive Director Marylanders to Prevent Gun Violence House Judiciary

March 5, 2020

Dear Chairman Clippinger, Vice-Chair Atterbeary, and Members of the Committee,

Marylanders to Prevent Gun Violence is a local, grassroots organization dedicated to reducing gun deaths and injuries throughout the state of Maryland, with a particular focus on reducing urban gun violence and gun suicide. **We urge the committee to vote FAVORABLY on HB 1629 to establish a Firearm Crime Study out of the Office of the Attorney General.**

Maryland has strong and meaningful gun laws but we are surrounded by states with looser gun laws. There are gaping loopholes in the federal system fueling gun violence in Maryland. If we want our laws to be more effective at stemming violence, we must have accurate data and research to better understand the problem.

I want to remind the committee that last Session, Senator Jill Carter and Delegate Sandy Bartlett sponsored a Gun Trace Study (Senate Bill 622 and House Bill 744) that was passed and serves as a good guide for this bill. The resulting legislation requires the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention (GOCAP) to conduct and publish a study that will determine where crime guns originate, where they are being diverted to the underground market, and what the most glaring gaps are in the law. This will help guide better policies for laws and implementation of the laws we already passed. If we do not research the problem, we will never truly develop the most holistic approaches to save lives. The study will be released December 2020.

The data collected through HB 1629 will dovetail nicely with the information collected via the Gun Trace Study. HB 1629 will require the Attorney General's Office to review gun related firearm crimes from August 1, 2015 to July 31, 2021. This five year back look is crucial to the amount of data and information that GOCAP can review and analyze.

We encourage the committee to consider including data collection, aggregation and study of firearm related fatalities and injuries. The last year The Maryland Department of Health released this data was in 2016 and that data only reflects statistics from 2013. This information is critical to understanding the scope and far reaching consequences of gun violence in Maryland. We urge the committee to include the collection and public dissemination of these firearm related deaths and injuries from 2013 forward.

We ask for a favorable report on HB 1629.