



Senate Bill 784
Comprehensive Community Safety Funding Act

MIEMSS Position: Support

Bill Summary: SB 784 creates an 11% excise tax for licensed firearms dealers on sales involving firearms, firearm accessories, and ammunition. Revenues are to be distributed to the Maryland Trauma Physician Services Fund (44%); the R Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center at the University of Maryland Medical System (29%); the Violence Intervention & Prevention Program (23%); the Survivors of Homicide Victims Grant Program (2%); and the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention & Intervention within the Maryland Department of Health (2%).

Rationale:

- Maryland's trauma centers provide expert care for critically injured patients, including those injured by firearms. Maryland's trauma centers – designated by MIEMSS – are the foundation of a system that is designed to optimize outcomes for people with complex, and often life-threatening injuries. Seriously injured patients may be initially transported to trauma centers or transferred to trauma centers from community hospitals after initial stabilization. As injuries can occur anytime day or night, trauma centers must maintain a constant state of readiness which requires considerable investments in personnel, equipment, and operations.
- Firearm-related injuries are among the most critical treated by trauma centers. In FY 2023, Maryland's trauma centers cared for more than 1500 firearm-related injured people. They had higher Injury Severity Scores than other mechanisms of injury (e.g., falls, and motor vehicle crashes). Subsequently, patients with firearm injuries are at increased risk of dying, even after arriving at a trauma center. These factors serve to underscore the importance of each trauma center's perpetual state of readiness to provide expert care, and the investments they make to do so.
- For more than 20 years, the Trauma Physicians Services Fund (Fund) has provided supplemental funding to help support some of the costs associated with the substantial financial commitment associated with trauma center designation. Fund revenue is provided by a \$2.50 per year (\$5 biennial) vehicle registration fee surcharge. Since its creation, however, revenues from the Fund have become insufficient to provide the support needed, and rules governing Fund distribution need modernization.
- SB 784 will provide much-needed revenue to the Fund from the sales of firearms, firearm accessories and ammunition. The additional revenue will help support trauma centers as they continue to provide life-saving treatment to seriously injured people.

MIEMSS Supports SB 784 and Asks for a Favorable Report