

CROSSOVER BILL SB0784_RichardKaplowitz_FAV
3/27/2024

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**TESTIMONY ON CROSSOVER BILL SB#/0784 – FAVORABLE
Comprehensive Community Safety Funding Act**

TO: Chair Atterbeary, Vice Chair Wilkins and members of the Ways and Means Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard K. Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3. I am submitting this testimony in support of CROSSOVER BILL SB#0784, Comprehensive Community Safety Funding Act.

Gun violence is an epidemic in our society, in our country, and in Maryland. As reported by Everytown for Gun Safety ¹: “In Maryland, the rate of gun deaths increased 36% from 2010 to 2019, compared to a 17% increase nationwide. The rate of gun suicides increased 10% and gun homicides increased 53%, compared to a 13% increase and 26% increase nationwide, respectively.” ² 2024 has seen at least one mass gun violence shooting every day so far.

This bill is an attempt to place the costs of this violence and treatment of the victims a responsibility of those that create the problem. It is, at heart, a consumer protection bill that says a dangerous product with life-changing effects may be legally owned but its known negative effects and harm must be financially indemnified by the sellers of these munitions and ammunition. It does not forbid purchases; it adds to their cost to assist Maryland in caring for and providing health care to the victims of the misuse of their products.

The report cited says that Maryland has the 24th-highest societal cost of gun violence in the US at \$949 per person each year. Gun deaths and injuries cost Maryland \$6 billion, of which \$376 million is paid by taxpayers.

This bill is a way for Maryland to recoup that \$376 million by making those creating the costs responsible for contributing to paying those costs.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report and pass CROSSOVER BILL SB0784.

¹ <https://everystat.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Gun-Violence-in-Maryland-2.9.2021.pdf>