



Maryland
Hospital Association

February 7, 2023

To: The Honorable Will Smith, Chair, Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

Re: Letter of Support - Senate Bill 159 - Firearms - Maryland Voluntary Do Not Sell Firearm Registry - Establishment

Dear Chair Smith:

On behalf of the Maryland Hospital Association's (MHA) 60 member hospitals and health systems, we appreciate the opportunity to comment in support of Senate Bill 159.

Suicides account for 54% of all firearm deaths, and 53% of all suicides involve a firearm, according to the [Kaiser Family Foundation](#). In Maryland, 2,837 lives were lost between 2010 and 2020 to self-inflicted harm with the use of a firearm—about 4.3 deaths per 100,000 Marylanders—the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found.

Voluntary do not sell firearm registries are an innovative tool to prevent suicide by firearm. Laws, like the one proposed by SB 159, have passed in Washington state, Virginia, and Utah and grant people the option to add their names voluntarily and confidentially to a state system to prevent them from impulsively purchasing a gun.

While advocacy groups can cite statistics, the best arguments come from individuals with lived experience. In an op-ed published in [The Washington Post](#) Aug. 30, 2022, Bryan Barks wrote “I have mental clarity most of the time, but I know storms will come again. I want to have the ability to preempt crises. I want to have the ability to protect myself from the version of me that is not thinking clearly.”

For these reasons, we urge a *favorable* report on SB 159.

For more information, please contact:
Erin Dorrien, Vice President, Policy
Edorrien@mhaonline.org