



**TESTIMONY OF THE CRITICAL ISSUES FORUM: ADVOCACY  
FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND  
ON FEBRUARY 9, 2021  
BEFORE THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL  
IN SUPPORT OF BILL 4-21**

**Protection of Minors and Public Places - Restrictions Against Ghost Guns and Undetectable  
Guns**

The Critical Issues Forum: Advocacy for Social Justice (CIF) provides this testimony in support of Bill 4-21, which would prohibit:

- transferring a ghost gun or undetectable gun to a minor,
- manufacturing a gun, including through a 3D printing process, in the presence of a minor,
- storing ghost guns, undetectable guns, or gun components in places that the person should know are accessible to minors,
- the sale, transfer, manufacture, or possession of ghost guns or undetectable guns within 100 yards of a place of public assembly, and
- the sale, transfer, possession, or use of a computer code to create a firearm through a 3D printing process within 100 yards of a place of public assembly.

CIF is a coalition of three Montgomery County synagogues - Temple Beth Ami, Kol Shalom, and Adat Shalom - that include over 1,750 households and three denominations of Judaism: Reform, Conservative, and Reconstructionist. CIF advocates in favor of policy proposals that advance our core values, including the sanctity of human life. There can be no question that protecting our children from the danger of untraceable ghost guns can save lives. These weapons circumvent the laws that restrict access to firearms by our children, putting their lives at risk.

Ghost guns are firearms without serial numbers, which are most often assembled from a kit purchased over the internet, without any of the safeguards contained in federal or state law. When used in a crime, they are untraceable. These weapons are favored by individuals who are prohibited from purchasing firearms. As Maryland Attorney General Brian Frosh recently stated in a press release announcing that Maryland had joined 19 other states supporting a lawsuit seeking federal regulation of these firearms: "ghost guns endanger residents of [Maryland] and

impede law enforcement's ability to investigate and prosecute criminal activity.”<sup>1</sup>

The risk that access to ghost guns has for our young people is real. A 2017 study found that firearms were the second leading cause of death for children aged 1 to 17, surpassed only by motor vehicle injury deaths.<sup>2</sup> The same study reported that from 2012 to 2014 nearly 1300 children died and 5790 were treated for gunshot wounds each year. According to the authors, 53% of those deaths were homicides, 38% were suicides, and 6% were unintentional. The ability to easily bypass our laws that restrict their purchase of, and access to, firearms by procuring ghost guns through the internet can only increase this toll to us all - adults and children of all ages.

This is a problem that can be solved. The restrictions proposed in Bill 4-21 are a welcome first step. By using the county's discretion to regulate firearms access for children and use in public places, the bill strikes at important dangers posed by ghost guns. Further, action by Montgomery County may encourage our state legislators to enact the ghost gun legislation that has been proposed in the General Assembly this session by Senator Susan Lee and Delegate Leslie Lopez, who have been championing legislation that would close this loophole entirely in our state.

For these reasons, the Critical Issues Forum urges the Council to adopt Bill 4-21

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<sup>1</sup> AG press release

<sup>2</sup> Fowler KA, Dahlberg LL, Haileuesus T, et al. Childhood Firearm Injuries in the United States. *Pediatrics*. 2017;140(1): e20163486.