

Testimony in Support of SAFE legislation

October 10, 2023

My name is Mindy Landau, and I am writing to voice my support for Councilman Glass's bill (SAFE) that would require literature on suicide prevention to be distributed during firearm sales at all Montgomery County gun stores. Sadly, suicides represent 42% of all gun deaths in the state of Maryland. The presence of a gun in the home increases the risk of suicide by 300%. As a long time advocate of gun violence prevention, and the co-founder of the Montgomery County Chapter of Brady United, I have heard of and seen multiple instances of preventable gun injuries and suicides in our county. I believe that education is a meaningful step towards alerting gun owners to the threat of suicide. Instruction on keeping guns locked and away from ammunition, along with storing them in a special gun safe, providing trigger locks, gun vaults and lock boxes, including keeping them far away from children, would go a long way toward reducing these senseless, and often impulsive, acts. Statistics show that gun deaths from suicide are far more lethal than other methods that are often survivable.

Since 2006, the firearm suicide rate for male minors has increased by approximately 60%. Firearms account for just 5% of American suicide attempts, but more than half of all suicide deaths. Importantly, of those who survive and receive care post-suicide attempts, 70% will live without attempting suicide again.

These facts are sobering, but by strengthening existing gun safety education, we can avoid a countless number of firearm suicide attempts and save lives in Montgomery County.