

**PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY COUNCIL**  
**WORKGROUP TO STUDY GUN VIOLENCE**  
**MINUTES**  
**June 18, 2025**

- Members Present

Krystal Oriadha, Council Member District 7, Co-Chair  
Terence Clark, Director, Department of Corrections  
Elana Belon-Butler, Director, Family Services  
Zachary Olare, Deputy Chief, Police Department  
Brittany Vazquez, Program Manager, Division of Behavioral Health, Department of Health  
Dr. Tyreese McAllister, Ayanna J. McAllister Legacy Foundation  
Tanesia Gibson, Assistant Sheriff, Office of the Sheriff

- Members Absent:

Juanita Agnew, The Jayz Agnew Foundation  
Tyrone Collington Sr., Chief, Police Chiefs' Association  
Lisa Garry, Deputy Secretary of Community Services for the Maryland Department of Juvenile Services  
Perry Paylor, Deputy State's Attorney, State's Attorney's Office, Co-Chair  
Terence Clark, Director, Department of Corrections  
Melissa Pryce, Public Defender  
Carlesa Peterson, Assistant Director, Department of Social Services

- Staff Present

Sandra Eubanks, HHSPS Committee Director  
Rhonda Riddick, HHSPS Committee Aide  
Tiffany Hannon, Chief of Staff to Council Member Oriadha  
Shirley Anglin, TIEE Committee Aide

- **Welcome & Opening Remarks**

The Gun Violence Workgroup convened for its final meeting to vote on the proposed recommendations. Council Member Krystal Oriadha, who serves as Co-Chair of the Workgroup and represents District 7, opened the meeting by welcoming participants. She reminded the members that the meeting is open to the public, recorded, and accessible via the Council website, along with any shared presentations. Co-Chair Oriadha expressed appreciation for the members' ongoing engagement and emphasized the importance of the recommendations, which will be presented to the full County Council and County Executive as the next step toward actionable solutions to address gun violence in Prince George's County.

- **Consideration of Minutes**

The Co-Chair opened the floor for consideration of the May 29<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes, noting that all members should have received a copy in advance. She asked if there were any suggested edits; hearing none, she called for a motion to approve. Tyreese MacAlister made a motion to approve, which was seconded by Co-Chair Oriadha. With no objections raised, the minutes from the May 28<sup>th</sup> meeting were officially approved.

- **Focus Topic Discussion**  
**Policy and Legislation**
- **Establish a County Office of Gun Violence Prevention**

The office would coordinate cross-agency violence reduction strategies, data tracking, funding distribution to ensure sustained violence reduction efforts, and develop a long-term gun violence prevention plan. The anticipated timeline for establishment is six to twelve months, with an estimated annual budget of \$250,000 to \$500,000. The recommendation would have a high impact by centralizing efforts and improving accountability.

- **Implement a County Gun Violence Impact Assessment**

This recommendation would require new developments to consider and address potential effects on community safety, similar to existing health-related assessments. The goal would be to ensure that, in addition to current assessments for school system strain and public safety response times, projects would also be evaluated for their potential effects on gun violence and community safety.

- **Expanding Protective Order Laws**

Advocating for state-level legislative changes to expand existing protective and peace orders to include the temporary removal of firearms from individuals deemed a risk to themselves or others, and align with red flag law principles. Currently, firearm removal is limited to specific protective orders. The recommendation aims to make this authority standard across all protective orders to reduce the risk of firearm-related harm, particularly in domestic violence cases.

During the discussion, Elana Belon-Butler, Director, Department of Family Services, voiced strong support, citing the prevalence of domestic violence fatalities in the county and emphasizing the importance of removing firearms in such high-risk situations.

- **Require Safe Firearm Storage, Unloaded, Locked with Ammunition Stored Separately**

The recommendation would require gun owners to store firearms unloaded and locked, with ammunition stored separately, and establish penalties for noncompliance.

Dr. McAllister clarified that Maryland does include safe storage requirements, particularly in homes with children or individuals experiencing mental illness. Violations typically come into play if an incident occurs due to improper storage.

- **Licensing Requirements for Gun Ownership**

This recommendation would require gun owners to complete safety training and obtain a license prior to purchasing a firearm.

Dr. McAllister explained that current law requires individuals to complete a set number of training hours, including time at a shooting range, before obtaining a license to purchase a gun. Additionally, a safety class must be completed before the license is received and the purchase is made.

Co-Chair Oriadha initially supported the idea, but following clarification from participants that Maryland already requires safety training and licensure, agreed to strike the recommendation.

- **Assault Weapons Restrictions**

The recommendation would further regulate assault weapons. Co-Chair Oriadha noted that Maryland has already passed stricter assault weapon laws in recent years. It was determined that additional local action may not be required, but will review for alignment.

- **Community-Based Violence Interruption Programs**

Invest in local violence interruption models to prevent gun violence.

Co-Chair Oriadha identified this as a high-priority recommendation for the Workgroup since it is a community-based prevention shown to reduce violence when adequately funded. She acknowledged that federal funding cuts have impacted such programs, especially in neighboring areas like Baltimore and Washington, D.C. She emphasized the need for local investment, potentially supplemented by private partnerships or foundation support. She stressed that police funding alone is not sufficient for prevention, and that proactive investment in root causes is key.

Dr. McAllister raised a question about whether gun violence will remain a funding priority given the county's own budget cuts. Will it be treated like essential areas, such as education and public safety, where cuts are kept to a minimum? Or might it be deprioritized?

In response to the question, Co-Chair Oriadha expressed that it depends on the priority of the decision-makers at the time. She indicated that it is a priority for her. She further explained that we need to expand our understanding of public safety beyond just funding the police. While policing is important, it is not prevention. Police respond after something has happened; they're there to assist and investigate, not to stop the issue before it occurs. Unfortunately, we haven't invested enough in addressing the root causes of violence, which is where true prevention begins.

Dr. McAllister emphasized that police focus on intervention, not postvention, and there has been minimal investment in gun violence prevention. It's disappointing because some programs have shown real promise in reducing violence, but were disrupted due to a lack of funding.

- **Program Assessment and Audit**

Chair Oriadha suggested conducting a five-year audit and evaluation of existing county-funded violence prevention programs to assess outcomes, identify promising models, and guide future investments. This will create a data-driven foundation for sustainable prevention strategies.

Co-Chair Oriadha supported this as a new recommendation. She stated it could help avoid reinventing the wheel by reinvesting in effective programs that were underfunded or unable to scale.

Brittany Vazquez, Program Manager, Division of Behavioral Health, Health Department, shared an update on the Extreme Risk Protective Order Liaison Program, currently funded by the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy. The program serves as a preventive tool by offering community outreach, training, and support for both petitioners (potential victims) and respondents (those at risk of causing harm).

Ms. Vazquez explained that the program officially launched on May 28, 2025, and runs through September 30, 2026. Although grant-funded, the program is likely to be sustained beyond the grant period, as both the lead and liaison positions are already supported through the general fund.

The ERPO program is also being coordinated with the County's crisis response efforts due to likely overlap in populations served. Interventions are triggered once an ERPO is filed, with referrals coming from the Sheriff's Office or District Court.

Ms. Vazquez provided the requested Protective Order vs. ERPO filings in Prince George's County data. In 2024, the number of final order hearings for Domestic Violence Protective Orders 2024 was 5,022. In 2024, the number of ERPOs filed was 46.

### **Focus Topic Discussion**

#### **Mental Health & Diversion Impact**

Co-Chair Oriadha resumed the discussion on Mental Health and Diversion-related recommendations, noting that several had previously been discussed:

- **Implementation and Enforcement of Extreme Risk Protective Orders (ERPO)**
- **Expand Community-Based Violence Interrupter Program**
- **Expand Resources and Capacity for Gun Possession Diversion Court Programs**
- **Subsidized Secure Firearm Storage**
  
- **Increase Access to Trauma-Informed Mental Health Services in Schools**

This recommendation would integrate trauma-informed behavioral health supports and counseling services in schools, particularly for high-risk youth. It comes with a high impact and addresses the root causes of violence and emotional outcomes, and includes mandatory intervention for youth found in possession of firearms, even in non-violent situations. Discussion centered around expanding services not only in middle and high schools but also starting earlier in elementary school. The Co-Chair noted that current issues in middle schools suggest earlier interventions may be more effective.

Dr. McAllister suggested that when students are found with a gun, whether at school or through police intervention, but haven't committed a crime, the county should provide a mandatory program. This could be an eight-week course covering topics like gun violence, anger management, cognitive distortions, and legal consequences.

Co-Chair Oriadha strongly supported the idea of shifting more youth interventions from voluntary to mandatory, especially when youth are already entering the criminal justice system for similar behaviors.

- **Develop a Public Mental Health Awareness Campaign**

This recommendation aims to prevent crises before they escalate and promote responsible gun practices through education and early intervention. The focus is on the intersection of mental health and gun access, including education on the risks, warning signs of escalation, and responsible gun ownership, as well as clear direction to community-based supports and intervention services. The recommendation should also include a nonjudgmental, accessible approach, where families can freely obtain locks and storage tools.

Dr. McAllister suggested partnering with organizations like Moms Demand Action and the Ayana J. McAllister Legacy Foundation to expand safe firearm storage education and free gun lock distribution with a specific focus on reaching families through county schools.

- **Invest in Research and Mental Health – Gun Violence Interventions**

Fund and expand research and community programming at the intersection of mental health and gun violence.

Co-Chair Oriadha emphasized this as one of the most critical recommendations, underscoring the need for sustained investment in prevention and intervention. She further emphasized that addressing root causes such as trauma, desensitization to violence, and underdeveloped adolescent decision-making is essential. Long-term solutions must involve multi-level engagement, including partnerships with trusted community organizations. It is essential to include parent and family education as a core component of gun violence prevention.

- **Final Vote on All Recommendations**

After presenting the final recommendations for the Mental Health and Diversion Impact category, Co-Chair Oriadha moved to consider a final vote on all recommendations. She read aloud the title of each previously discussed recommendation and instructed members to flag any concerns or identify any missing items that should be added. Following this, the group would proceed to vote on the four scheduled topic recommendations as a package.

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Terence Clark, Director of Corrections, made a motion to approve all of the recommendations, seconded by Dr. McAllister. The motion was unanimously approved.

Co-Chair Oriadha expressed her deep appreciation to the members for their continued support, sharing that gun violence is a deeply personal issue for her and her community. Having experienced its aftermath firsthand, she affirmed her commitment to ensuring these recommendations are realized.

Co-Chair Oriadha also expressed her gratitude to the Committee Director, technical support staff, Clerk's Office, and her staff for their dedicated work behind the scenes.

- Identify Next Steps

Co-Chair Oriadha explained that the next steps will involve reviewing all recommendations to identify and consolidate any overlapping items. Following that, a draft report will be prepared and forwarded to the members for their review and feedback.

- Next Meeting Date

#### Final Meeting

- Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at approximately 12 Noon.