

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY COUNCIL
COMMITTEE REPORT
2024 Legislative Session

Reference No.:	CB-010-2024
Draft No.:	1
Committee:	Health, Human Services, and Public Safety Committee
Date:	03/21/2024
Action:	FAV(A)

REPORT:

Committee Vote: Favorable with Amendments: 4 - 0 (In favor, Council Members Fisher, Blegay, Olson, and Watson)

Absent: Council Member Hawkins

The Health, Human Services, and Public Safety Committee convened on March 21, 2024, to consider CB-010-2024.

The Bill requires the Department of Health to create and disseminate specific literature to businesses selling firearms or ammunition. The literature pertains to gun and firearm safety, gun and firearm training, suicide prevention, mental health, and conflict resolution.

The sellers are to post signs on the premises where such transactions occur and distribute them to all individuals who purchase firearms or ammunition. The Department of Health has the authority to enforce regulations, and failure to comply constitutes a civil violation that may result in a civil fine of up to \$100.00.

The Legislative Budget and Policy Analyst provided an overview of the bill along with details on the fiscal impact statement, indicating that at the time of this report, information necessary to determine the amount of any County expenditures required to comply with the Bill's provisions entirely was not

provided to Council staff. However, when a version of this bill was enacted in Montgomery County, the Montgomery County Office of Budget and Management estimated that it would cost the county \$15,000 a year in operating expenses “for design and printing of the literature and posters.” As Montgomery County has five (5) gun stores, it would suggest that the cost to the County would be similar or slightly less.

Further, the Enactment of CB-010-2024 may have a favorable indirect impact on the County if it successfully reduces the overall number of suicide attempts occurring in the County, which would reduce the workload of the Police Department, Fire/ EMS, and other emergency services, which would be called upon to respond to suicide attempts.

The bill sponsor, Council Member Oriadha, indicated that this legislation is vital, considering the concerning statistics regarding suicide rates. Council Member Oriadha is seeking her colleagues’ support for this bill following an incident where an individual visited a gun range without purchasing a gun and subsequently committed suicide—naming the bill after Grant Coffield is a meaningful way to honor his memory. Mr. Coffield's parents were present and voiced their support for the legislation, delivering heartfelt testimony on behalf of their son.

Sakinda Skinner, County Council Liaison, Office of the Executive, read a statement on behalf of the Health Officer who could not attend the committee meeting. “Suicide prevention is a priority of the Health Department. We support doing all we can to reduce gun violence and educate about mental health issues. The Health Department can handle items 3,4 and 5 listed on page 2 of the bill related to suicide prevention, mental health, and conflict resolution. However, on page 1, items 1 and 2, firearm safety and firearm training don’t fall under the prevue of the Health Department. The current state requirement dictates that gun shops must furnish literature to any individuals purchasing guns or ammunition. The Health Department has no expertise in firearm safety and gun and firearm training. Therefore, the Health Department would not be the best agency to provide literacy on these topics.”

In response to Ms. Skinner's concerns, the Chief Legislative Officer further clarified the bill's intent, which doesn’t involve generating new content but rather organizing information about existing resources.

The Chief Legislative Officer discussed the amendments that added language about gun ranges to the list of distributors and added Grant Coffield as the title of this bill. All of the amendments were voted on individually and approved with a vote of 4-0.

1. Page 1, Line 19

After “retailer in the county” add, “or any bona fide rifle, pistol, or skeet shooting range as defined by Section 27-500 of the Zoning Ordinance and regulated pursuant to Subtitle 27 of the Prince George’s County Code.”

Will now read as follows:

The Department of Health shall prepare and distribute to each gun shop and firearm retailer in the County or any bona fide rifle, pistol, or skeet shooting range as defined by Section 27-500 of the Zoning Ordinance and regulated pursuant to Subtitle 27 of the Prince George’s County Code, literature regarding:

2. Page 2, Line 5

After “firearm,” add “or shooting range.”

3. Page 2, Line 22

Insert the following text:

SECTION 3. BE IT FURTHER ENACTED that this Act shall be known as the Grant Coffield’s Law.

After discussion, the Health, Human Services, and Public Safety Committee voted 4-0, favorably as amended on CB-10-2024.