



FACSIMILE NO.

STATE OF MARYLAND
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

WRITER'S DIRECT DIAL NO.
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January 29, 2020

To: The Honorable William C. Smith
Chair, Judicial Proceedings Committee

From: Hannibal G. Williams II Kemerer, Legislative Director, Office of the Attorney General

Re: SB 327 Public Safety – Handgun Qualification License – Training Exemption
(OPPOSE)

Senate Bill 327 amends Section 5-117.1 of the Public Safety Article to exempt Delaware, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, and Washington D.C. law enforcement officers from the firearms safety training course normally required to obtain a Handgun Qualification License (“HQL”). Under existing law, HQL applicants are exempted from the firearms safety training course if they have (1) completed a certified firearms training course approved by the Secretary; (2) completed a course of instruction in competency and safety in the handling of firearms prescribed by the Department of Natural Resources; (3) are a qualified handgun instructor; (4) are an honorably discharged member of the armed forces of the United States or National Guard; (5) are an employee of an armored car company and have a wear and carry permit; or (6) lawfully own a regulated firearm.

We believe the majority of police officers in neighboring states would likely qualify for a firearms safety training course exemption under the six grounds in existing law. Moreover, merely because someone is a police officer in a neighboring state does not necessarily mean the person warrants an HQL training course exemption here in Maryland. Different states have divergent views of who is qualified to serve as a police officer. Because the vetting process for police in neighboring jurisdictions is a virtual unknown, Maryland should not exempt Delaware, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, and Washington D.C. law enforcement officers from the firearms safety training course normally required to obtain an HQL. The Attorney General respectfully requests that the Judiciary Committee unfavorably report this bill.

cc: Members of the Judiciary Committee

