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BILL NO.: Senate Bill 338  
TITLE: Firearms - Handgun Permit - Preliminary Approval  
COMMITTEE: Judicial Proceedings  
DATE: February 8, 2022  
POSITION: **OPPOSE**

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Senate Bill 338 would modify the sequence of requirements that an applicant for a handgun must complete before obtaining a handgun permit. The Women's Law Center opposes this bill as we believe public policy should not provide opportunities for gun owners to have access to firearms prior to receiving vitally important training.

In SB 338, an applicant for a handgun permit need not successfully complete a certified firearms training course prior to obtaining preliminary approval for a handgun permit. SB 338 still requires an applicant to complete the certified firearms training course and provide proof to the Secretary of Public Safety of the completion of the certified firearms training course within 120 days of receipt of preliminary approval for the handgun permit. Absent completion of the certified firearms training course within the 120 days, SB 338 provides for the revocation of the preliminary approval and denial of the handgun permit.

However, through our work with victims of domestic violence, we know that the introduction of firearms in domestic violence situations increases the possibility of serious injury or lethality. This may be especially true in a volatile situation where the holder of a handgun is not properly trained in its use in advance of having a permit issued to wear, carry, or transport a handgun. Without completing the certified firearms training course in the present sequence required under the current law, there may be a period of time when an applicant has legal entitlement to a handgun without adequate safety training. Maryland's emphasis on firearms safety as expressed in our current law is vital to reduce the likelihood that these dangerous weapons will be misused. Under SB 338, during those 120 days, before revocation and denial of the permit can occur, the person has the gun and may use it. Because of the potential danger of an applicant's use of firearms without appropriate preparation, we urge an unfavorable report on SB 338.

For the above reasons, the Women's Law Center of Maryland urges an unfavorable report for SB 338.

*The Women's Law Center of Maryland is a private, non-profit, membership organization that serves as a leading voice for justice and fairness for women. It advocates for the rights of women through legal assistance to individuals and strategic initiatives to achieve systemic change.*