

Department of Fiscal Services
Maryland General Assembly

FISCAL NOTE

Senate Bill 343 (Senator Ferguson)
Judicial Proceedings

Handgun Permits - Course Requirements - Qualified Instructors

This bill eliminates the requirements that a person have a “good and substantial reason” for getting a handgun permit and not exhibit “a propensity for violence or instability.” It requires an applicant for a handgun permit to complete a handgun instruction course, and requires that an applicant be at least 21 years old. In addition, the Department of State Police must issue a permit within 45 days and certify and regulate handgun instructors. Restrictions may not be placed on handgun permits.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Indeterminate but potentially significant increase in general fund revenues and expenditures.

Local Effect: None.

Fiscal Analysis

Background: Under current law a handgun permit application costs \$75; a \$50 renewal is required every two years. There are 18,192 people in Maryland licensed to carry a handgun. In 1995 the State Police issued 2,870 initial handgun permits.

It currently takes a minimum of 60 to 90 days to receive the results of a national criminal history record check from the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

State Effect: Based on information from the Department of State Police, the Department of Fiscal Services estimates that it costs \$189 to process a handgun permit application and issue a license. As the fee for a handgun permit is \$75, it costs the State Police an estimated \$114 per application. This includes salaries, fringe benefits, equipment, and administrative costs.

The renewal application fee of \$50 equals the cost.

The State Police estimate that elimination of the requirements that a person have a “good and substantial reason” for carrying a firearm and not show a “propensity for violence or instability,” and eliminating restrictions on permits, will lead to an increase of 9,100 applications annually in each of the next five years, even after accounting for a small decrease since people age 18 through 20 will no longer be eligible. At a net cost of \$114 per application, and accounting for the October 1 effective date, general fund expenditures could exceed revenues by \$777,700 in fiscal 1997, and \$1.04 million annually thereafter. The Department of Fiscal Services advises that any such increase would depend upon the actual number of permit applications and cannot be reliably estimated at this time.

The bill requires the State Police to issue a permit within 45 days. Because the national criminal history record check takes at least 60 days, it is assumed that the State Police will be required to revoke permits that have been issued. It is assumed that this can be done with existing resources.

The State Police are required to certify handgun instructors and issue instructor’s cards. This can be handled with existing budgeted resources.

Information Source(s): Department of State Police, Department of Fiscal Services

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