

Department of Legislative Services
 Maryland General Assembly
 2022 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 327 (Senator Ready, *et al.*)
 Judicial Proceedings

Public Safety – Permit to Carry, Wear, or Transport a Handgun – Qualifications

This bill specifies that, under provisions applicable to requirements for the issuance of a permit to wear, carry, or transport a handgun, personal protection or self-defense constitute a good and substantial reason for issuance of the permit.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: General fund revenues from handgun permit fees increase by \$7.5 million in FY 2023. Future year revenues reflect the licensure issuance and renewal cycle as well as a decrease in new permit applications and renewals over time. General fund expenditures increase by \$5.1 million in FY 2023 to process additional permit applications. Future year expenditures reflect annualization and ongoing costs.

(in dollars)	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	FY 2027
GF Revenue	\$7,500,000	\$6,375,000	\$9,918,800	\$8,656,000	\$7,560,100
GF Expenditure	\$5,103,700	\$5,483,700	\$5,640,900	\$5,795,100	\$5,948,000
Net Effect	\$2,396,300	\$891,300	\$4,277,800	\$2,860,900	\$1,612,000

Note: () = decrease; GF = general funds; FF = federal funds; SF = special funds; - = indeterminate increase; (-) = indeterminate decrease

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: Meaningful.

Analysis

Current Law: Generally, an applicant for a handgun permit must, among other requirements, have a good and substantial reason to wear, carry, or transport a handgun.

“Good and substantial reason” includes a finding that the permit is necessary as a reasonable precaution against apprehended danger.

Current law requirements and background relating to the issuance of handgun permits is summarized in the **Appendix – Handgun Permit Requirements – Current Law/Background**.

State Revenues: The Department of Legislative Services estimates that this bill increases new handgun permit applications by about 100,000 in fiscal 2023. This is due in part to the drastic surge in sales during recent years and assumes a similar experience to that which was experienced in Wisconsin in 2012 when nearly 99,000 additional carry permit applications were received after its law was changed.

Assuming an increase of about 100,000 permit applications in fiscal 2023, general fund revenues from handgun permit fees increase by an estimated \$7.5 million in fiscal 2023. By fiscal 2025, the increase in general fund revenues increases to an estimated \$9.9 million, reflecting fee revenue from both initial applications and renewals. By fiscal 2027, the increase in general fund revenues for initial applications and renewals decreases to \$7.6 million; this estimate assumes that over time, initial handgun permit applications decline by 15% per year and that the total number of permits renewed decreases by 10% annually. **Exhibit 1** shows the estimated increase in general fund revenues from additional handgun permit fees through fiscal 2027.

Exhibit 1
Estimated Handgun Permit Fee Revenue under the Bill

	<u>FY 2023</u>	<u>FY 2024</u>	<u>FY 2025</u>	<u>FY 2026</u>	<u>FY 2027</u>
New Applications	100,000	85,000	72,250	61,413	52,201
Fee Revenue	\$7,500,000	\$6,375,000	\$5,418,750	\$4,605,975	\$3,915,075
Renewals	-	-	90,000	81,000	72,900
Fee Revenue	-	-	4,500,000	4,050,000	3,645,000
Total Revenue	\$7,500,000	\$6,375,000	\$9,918,750	\$8,655,975	\$7,560,075

Source: Department of Legislative Services

State Expenditures: General fund expenditures for the Department of State Police (DSP) increase by an estimated \$5.1 million in fiscal 2023, which reflects the bill’s October 1, 2022 effective date. DSP advises that its Licensing Division requires approximately eight hours to process one application. Based on an anticipated increase of approximately 100,000 applications in fiscal 2023, this estimate reflects the cost to hire

10 full-time troopers, 18 office services clerks, 4 administrative clerks, and 44 contractual background check investigators to process the additional handgun permit applications, issue permits, and review and issue permit renewals. The estimate includes salaries and fringe benefits, one-time start-up costs, and ongoing operating expenses.

Positions (Regular)	32.0
Positions (Contractual)	44.0
Salaries and Fringe Benefits (Regular)	\$2,206,455
Salaries and Fringe Benefits (Contractual)	1,914,149
Motor Vehicle Purchases and Operations	200,000
Additional Police and Civilian Equipment	722,648
Other Operating Expenses	<u>60,420</u>
Total FY 2023 State Expenditures	\$5,103,672

Future year expenditures reflect full salaries with annual increases and employee turnover as well as annual increases in ongoing operating expenses.

This estimate does not include any health insurance costs that could be incurred for specified contractual employees under the State’s implementation of the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

In addition, this estimate does not include any costs for rental space. While many of the positions needed to implement the bill can be housed in various DSP locations throughout the State, some will need to work directly within DSP’s licensing division, which has limited space. Should rental costs emerge in the future, DSP can request additional resources through the annual budget process.

DSP’s licensing division has experienced dramatic increases in firearm-related applications in recent years. Although the department has recently received additional positions, it continues to utilize significant overtime. In addition to the personnel and programming costs estimated above, DSP projects considerable trooper and civilian overtime costs in fiscal 2023. However, the new automated handgun permit application process, which was implemented in January 2020, has assisted with the processing of firearm purchase and handgun permit applications, and DSP anticipates that it will continue to assist with processing the expected increase in handgun permit applications under the bill. Should overtime or additional personnel costs emerge in the future, DSP can request additional resources through the annual budget process.

Small Business Effect: Because it is assumed that the bill leads to an increase in the number of handgun permits sought in the State, small businesses that provide firearm instruction may benefit from an increase in the demand for their services.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: Several bills have been introduced in prior years to alter the good and substantial reason standard for the issuance of a handgun permit. SB 27 of 2021 received a hearing in the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee, but no further action was taken. SB 198 of 2020 received a hearing in the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee, but no further action was taken. SB 115 of 2019 received an unfavorable report from the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee. Its cross file, HB 541, received an unfavorable report from the House Judiciary Committee. Legislation was also introduced in several prior legislative sessions.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Department of State Police; Department of Legislative Services

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fnu2/lgc

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Appendix

Handgun Permit Requirements – Current Law/Background

Generally, with certain exceptions, to be issued a handgun permit by the Secretary of State Police, an applicant (1) must be 18 or older; (2) must not have been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor for which a sentence of imprisonment for more than one year has been imposed or, if convicted, must have been pardoned or been granted relief under federal law; (3) must not have been convicted of a controlled dangerous substance violation and must not presently be an addict, a habitual user of a controlled dangerous substance, or an alcoholic; (4) must not exhibit a propensity for violence or instability, which may reasonably render possession of a handgun a danger to the applicant or another; (5) must have successfully completed, prior to application and each renewal, a specified firearms training course approved by the Secretary; (6) if younger than 30, must not have been committed to a facility for juveniles for longer than one year or adjudicated delinquent for a crime of violence, a felony, or misdemeanor that carries a statutory penalty of more than two years; and (7) must have a good and substantial reason to wear, carry, or transport a handgun. “Good and substantial reason” includes a finding that the permit is necessary as a reasonable precaution against apprehended danger. The Secretary may limit the geographic area, circumstances, or times of day, week, month, or year in which a permit is effective.

A handgun permit applicant must successfully complete, prior to the application and each renewal, a firearms training course approved by the Secretary that includes (1) for an initial application, a minimum of 16 hours of instruction by a qualified handgun instructor, or 8 hours of instruction for a renewal application; (2) classroom instruction on State firearm law, home firearm safety, and handgun mechanisms and operation; and (3) a firearms qualification component that demonstrates the applicant’s proficiency and use of the firearm.

An applicant for a permit is not required to complete a certified firearms training course if the applicant:

- is a law enforcement officer or a person who is retired in good standing from service with a law enforcement agency of the United States, the State, or any local law enforcement agency in the State;
- is a member, retired member, or honorably discharged member of the U.S. Armed Forces or the National Guard;

- is a qualified handgun instructor; or
- has completed a firearms training course approved by the Secretary.

A handgun permit application costs \$75; two years after the initial permit and every three years thereafter, a \$50 renewal fee is due. In addition, the applicant must pay for fingerprint-based federal and State criminal history background checks for an initial application. A person who applies for a renewal of a handgun permit is not required to be fingerprinted unless the Secretary requires a set of the person's fingerprints to resolve a question of the person's identity.

Generally, a handgun permit expires on the last day of the holder's birth month following two years after the date the permit is issued; however, the Secretary may establish an alternative expiration date for a permit to coincide with the expiration of a private detective license, a security guard certification, or a special police officer commission. A permit may be renewed for successive periods of three years each if, at the time of an application for renewal, the applicant possesses the qualifications for the issuance of a permit and pays the renewal fee.

In 2021, the Department of State Police (DSP) received 12,189 new applications for handgun permits and 6,242 handgun permit renewal applications. DSP denied 2,017 applications in the same year. There are currently approximately 26,120 active handgun permits in the State. It generally takes less than two days to receive the results of a national criminal history records check from the FBI and approximately 90 days to process, investigate, and issue a permit.