



# RACIAL EQUITY IMPACT NOTE

DEPARTMENT OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES  
MARYLAND ▪ GENERAL ▪ ASSEMBLY

2026 Session  
SB0677

---

## Public Safety – Handgun Permits – Firearms Training Course

---

### Bill Summary

This bill alters the classroom instruction requirements for the firearms training course that an applicant for a permit to wear, carry, or transport a handgun must successfully complete prior to an initial application and each renewal.

---

### Racial Equity Impact Statement

The bill's repeal of various components of firearm training related to compliance with State and federal laws may increase the number of permit holders in violation of firearm laws and, as a result, the number of permit revocations. No data is available to estimate the impact of this change on the various demographics of permit holders. The bill also alters the classroom instructional requirements for the firearms permit training course to include various defensive and safety-focused skills. Department of State Police (DSP) data shows that Black permit holders comprise 37% of the total population of permit holders. Black individuals are also victims of firearm injuries and deaths at a significantly higher rate than other groups in the State. While the bill's skills training requirements have the potential to increase the overall safety of permit holders, it is unclear to what extent this would impact firearm injury prevalence in the State, especially among Black Marylanders.

---

### Analysis

The bill repeals required components of classroom instruction on (1) State and federal firearm laws relating to several specified items and (2) handgun mechanisms and operations. Instead, the bill requires classroom instruction on (1) handgun nomenclature and selecting a handgun for self-defense; (2) ammunition knowledge and defensive ammunition selection; (3) basic defensive handgun skills; (4) drawing a handgun from concealment; (5) loading and stoppage remediation;

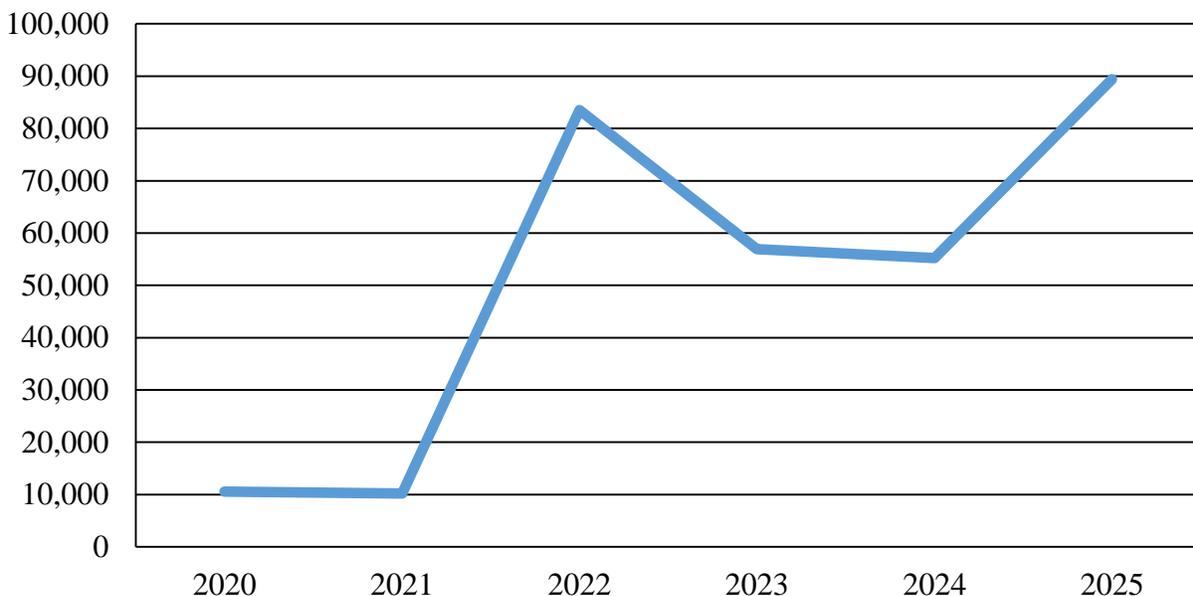
(6) mindset, including responding to an attack and the aftermath of an attack; (7) handgun concealment and carry modes; and (8) safe firearm storage, cleaning, and maintenance. Other required components of classroom instruction are unchanged.

### *Impacts of the Bill*

Maryland experienced a significant increase in handgun permit holders after the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *New York State Rifle & Pistol Association, Inc. v. Bruen*, 597 U.S. (2022), which held that residents of a state do not have to prove a special need for self-defense to get a permit to carry a handgun in public. This relaxed the standard for approval of carry permits in many states, including Maryland, which had required a “good and substantial reason” to be issued a license to carry. Post *Bruen*, in 2022, DSP received 85,266 new applications for handgun permits, of which 98% were approved, as compared to the 12,189 new permit applications filed in 2021. **Exhibit 1** shows the growth in approved permits from 2020 (pre-*Bruen*) to 2025.

---

**Exhibit 1**  
**Maryland Approved Wear and Carry Firearm Permits**  
**2020-2025**



Source: Department of State Police

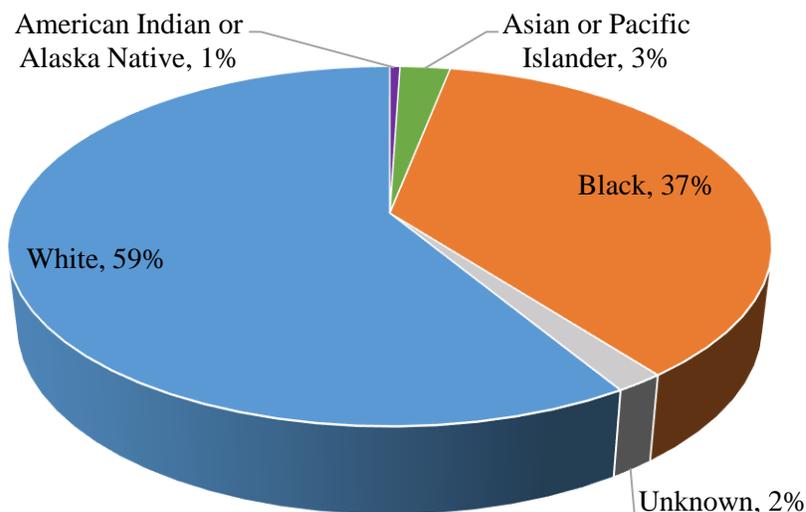
---

The bill, in combination with the State’s growing population of permit holders, could have serious public safety impacts because it repeals various educational compliance requirements necessary to maintain a firearm license in good standing. **Exhibit 2** shows the demographic makeup of permit holders in the State between November 2024 and November 2025, as reported by DSP. The DSP report also shows that 99 individuals had their permits revoked during the time period. Permit revocations could increase under the bill due to additional permit violations stemming from insufficient education about State and federal firearm laws. For example, existing law requires

individuals who are the subject of a domestic abuse protective order to surrender their firearm permit and provides the procedure for surrendering, transferring, or disposing of a firearm after becoming prohibited from possessing it. The bill’s removal of instructional requirements about existing State and federal firearm laws may increase the likelihood that permit holders will violate those laws. There is no data available to determine the overall impacts these changes would have on permit holders or how specific demographic groups within the permit holder population would be impacted.

---

**Exhibit 2**  
**State Firearm Permit Approvals**  
**November 2024 – November 2025**



Note: Percentages do not total 100% due to rounding.

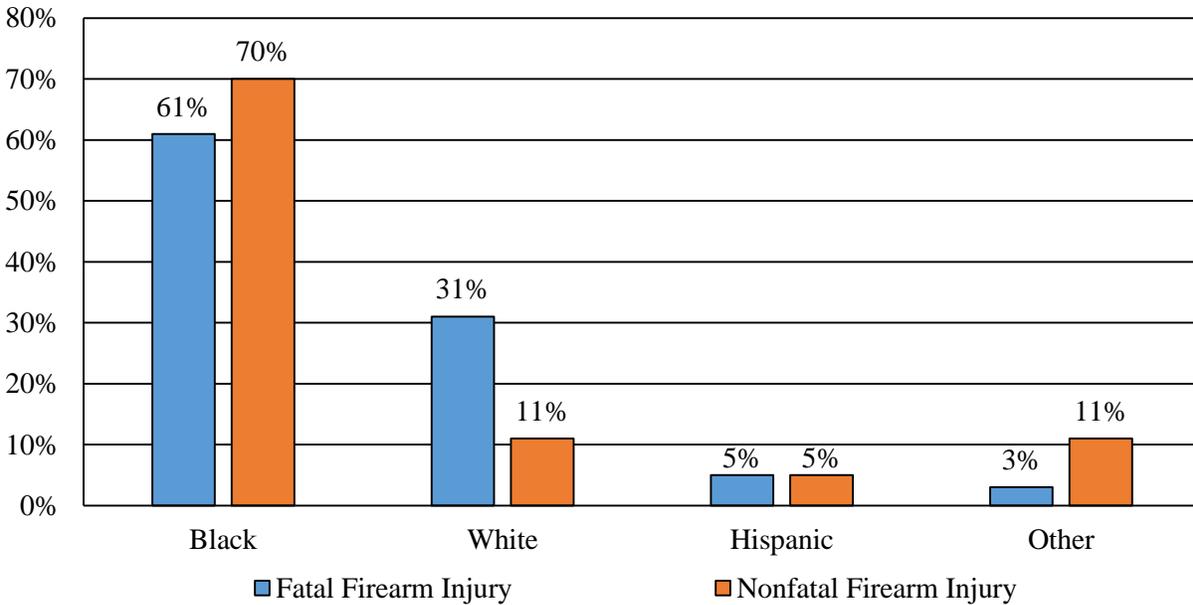
Source: Department of State Police

---

The bill also adds more detailed educational requirements that expand upon the defensive training instructional requirements in existing law. While current law requires instruction on the laws related to home firearm safety and handgun mechanisms and operations, the newly added provisions focus on direct training of defensive skills for operating a firearm and safe storage, cleaning, and maintenance. **Exhibit 3** shows fatal and nonfatal firearm-related incidents in Maryland as reported from hospital visits statewide between 2022 and 2024. During the time period, Black individuals accounted for 61% of fatal injuries and 70% of nonfatal injuries. Black permit holders made up 37% of the overall permit holder population during the reporting period. There is no data available to determine how the bill’s defensive-focused training requirements would impact permit holders in an environment where gun violence and injuries remain prevalent, especially among Black Marylanders. Specifically, there is no data readily available to measure the number of permit holders who were involved in events that resulted in gun violence, if any, and to what extent those permit holders were aggressors or bystanders, or to what extent previous firearm training affected outcomes.

---

**Exhibit 3**  
**Maryland Fatal and Nonfatal Firearm-related Injuries**  
**2022-2024**



Source: Maryland Department of Health

---

### Conclusion

Overall, the bill’s impacts are mixed and, in many respects, unknown. The bill’s removal of various classroom instructional requirements related to State and federal firearm laws could have downstream impacts on compliance. For example, a lack of compliance with firearm laws could increase fatal and nonfatal injuries if some permit holders fail to surrender their weapons, especially in the domestic abuse context. There is no way to predict these effects, however, nor is it possible to assess whether these effects will have specific equity impacts. The bill’s focus on defensive gun skills and safety in classroom instruction requirements may be generally beneficial to permit holders, but the data environment is complex.

To measure overall equity impacts, a number of prospective data points would need to be available, including firearm revocation reasons, permit holder-involved firearm crimes, defensive gun use involving permit holders, firearm surrender activity, unintentional firearm injuries among permit holders, and firearm training performance scores.

---

**Information Sources:** Department of State Police; Maryland Department of Health; Department of Legislative Services

**Analysis by:** Rafael Regales

**Published:** 03/02/2026

# Appendix – Maryland Demographics

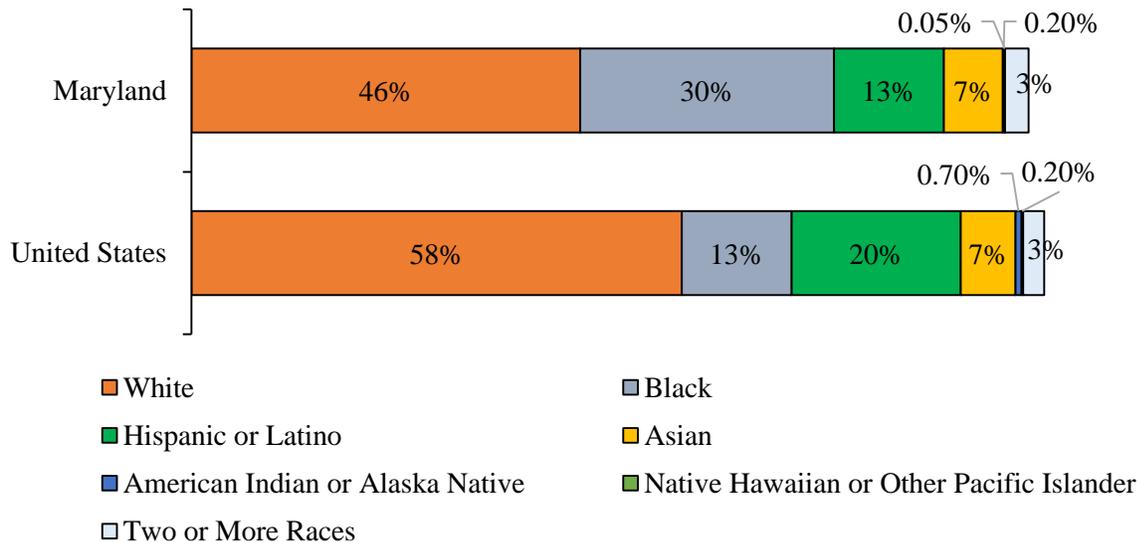
## *Race and Ethnicity of the Maryland Population*

Maryland’s 2020 census population is 6,177,244, a 7% increase from the 2010 census count and approximately 2% higher than the 2019 census population estimates. Maryland remains one of the most racially and ethnically diverse states in the nation and is ranked as the fourth most diverse state by the U.S. Census Bureau’s [Diversity Index](#). While no single racial or ethnic group constitutes a majority, racial minorities as a group constitute a majority of the State’s population. This diversity underpins the analytical framework used in racial equity impact notes (REIN), which seek to identify potential disparities that may be exacerbated or created by proposed criminal justice legislation.

## *Methodology Update*

Beginning in 2025, REIN will use annual population estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau’s Population Estimates Program (PEP) as the basis for disparity and disproportionality calculations. This methodological update reflects best practices in demographic analysis, as PEP data incorporate births, deaths, and migration to provide the most current population counts between censuses. Although the estimates are more temporally responsive, they do not materially change the proportionate racial and ethnic breakdown observed in the 2020 census. Instead, they conservatively reflect population changes since 2020 while preserving the overall demographic composition of the State.

**U.S. and Maryland Population by Race and Ethnicity  
2024 Population Estimates**



Note: Percentages do not total 100% due to rounding.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Annual Estimates of the Resident Population by Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin for the United States: April 1, 2020 to July 1, 2024 (NC-EST2024-SR11H) and (SC-EST2024-SR11H-24)