

# OFFICE OF THE STATE'S ATTORNEY FOR HARFORD COUNTY

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**DATE:** January 29, 2020

**BILL NUMBER:** SB 156

**POSITION:** Support

The Office of the State's Attorney for Harford County (HCSAO) supports SB 156.

SB 156 exempts applicants for a handgun qualification license (HQL) from the requirement to complete a firearms training course, if the applicant is a retired law enforcement officer, active or retired correctional officer, sheriff or sheriff's deputy that has completed a firearms training course administered in their initial training. This course must further be approved by the Secretary of the Maryland State Police.

The Harford County Sheriff's Office provides deputies for both patrol and correctional assignments. Recruits for either branch must undergo extensive firearms training in their respective academies that far exceed the four hour minimum instruction requirement for a handgun qualification license as currently outlined in Public Safety Article, § 5-117.1.

The HQL instructional requirement was most certainly devised to provide basic firearms training. Clearly the population outlined in SB 156 are highly trained individuals who have met and exceeded this requirement through completion of their respective academies and by virtue of the fact that their firearms are a necessary component of their employment.

This legislation creates a common sense solution which will undoubtedly facilitate the ability of trained personnel to obtain a HQL and plainly promotes responsible gun ownership.

For these reasons the HCSAO requests a favorable report on SB 156.