

Daniel J. Carlin-Weber

SB221 – FAV

Judicial Proceedings Committee

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I am a firearms instructor and advocate of responsible firearms handling and ownership. Currently, I am certified by the Maryland State Police as a Qualified Handgun Instructor, Utah Concealed Firearm Permit Instructor, and NRA Range Safety Officer and Basic Pistol Instructor. Since 2016, I have instructed Marylanders from all walks of life on how to safely operate firearms and the responsibilities that come with their usage. I come before you today to urge a favorable report of Senate Bill 221.

SB221 would strike from Maryland Public Safety Article 5-117.1 (d)(3) language that in September 2013 the Maryland State Police had interpreted to mean that at least one live round of ammunition be fired to “demonstrate(s) the person’s safe operation and handling of a firearm” *AELR Hearing September 23, 2013*, Joint Committee on Administrative, Executive, and Legislative Review, <http://mgahouse.maryland.gov/mga/play/165e1c65-7553-4d81-855b-d19686855130/?catalog/03e481c7-8a42-4438-a7da-93ff74bdaa4c>. Currently, the training required to receive the Handgun Qualification License (HQL) is not complete until one live round of ammunition is fired from a handgun.

As an instructor who teaches the course necessary to acquire the HQL, I can attest that the live fire component is not necessary for a person to demonstrate that they can ably handle a firearm. All of the fundamentals of handling a firearm such as always keeping the muzzle pointed in a safe direction, keeping one's finger off of the trigger until ready to shoot, the safe loading and unloading of a firearm, proper grip, stance, and shooting technique, and operation of the firearm's mechanisms can all be done and *are all done* in the classroom without needing to go to a firing range in order to fire one live round of ammunition.

Barring the live fire requirement, the entire course can be taught in any safe, controlled environment. I have taught in VFW halls, workshops, offices, and even in students' own homes. We go through all the rules of firearms safety and then move on to the aforementioned motions of handling the gun without live ammunition being present. Instead, I use dummy rounds known as "snap-caps" that are the same shape as real ammunition, but do not contain any explosive material, are colored differently from live cartridges, and are entirely inert, making them safe to use anywhere. Additionally, I use a special cartridge that stays inside of a firearm's chamber and contains a laser. When the trigger is pulled and rear of the cartridge is struck by the gun's firing pin, a red laser is emitted through the barrel, simulating where the shot would have gone if it were an actual gunshot. These tools help students get all the basics they need to competently handle a firearm and I have yet to have a student

who learned the basics in class be unable to safely handle a firearm once at the range to actually fire the gun.

The live fire component creates the biggest obstacle for me as an instructor AND for the student as they need transportation to meet me at a range where I am able to teach. Many shooting ranges have their own instructors and do not necessarily allow outside instructors. The range I most frequently meet with students is an hour-long drive for me and sometimes even longer for the student. While I have helped some students get to the range when they lack transportation, I am not a taxi service and cannot do it for everyone. The range cannot be gotten to via public transportation and paid travel may be cost prohibitive for many.

The logistics of the range trip needed for me and my students is all for just *one* shot. One. The requirement does nothing to promote public safety, but instead creates more barriers to responsible gun ownership. The live fire component should be removed.

I request a favorable report.



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