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January 19, 2021

To: The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.  
Chair, Judicial Proceedings Committee

From: Office of the Attorney General

Re: **SB0309 – Handgun Permit – Preliminary Approval – Letter of Opposition**

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The Office of the Attorney General urges Judicial Proceedings Committee to unfavorably report SB 309. Maryland's wear, carry, and transport handgun law is a carefully crafted compromise that has withstood judicial challenges. Among other things, current law ensures that handgun purchasers have completed a certified firearms training course to help ensure that those who possess firearms know how to do so safely.

Senate Bill 309, however, would require the Secretary of the State Police to issue a preliminary approval of any applicants wear, carry, and transport application while providing the applicant 120 days after receipt of preliminary approval to take the required safety class. This is a classic instance of putting the cart before the horse. We should, of course, require handgun training before granting preliminary handgun wear, carry, or transport approvals. Otherwise, someone who is unskilled and untrained in the safe possession of firearms could spend upwards of four months wearing, carrying, or transporting the firearm before completing necessary and effective public safety training.

For all of the foregoing reasons, the Office of Attorney General urges an unfavorable report on SB 309.

cc: Committee Members