

BRIAN E. FROSH
Attorney General



ELIZABETH F. HARRIS
Chief Deputy Attorney General

CAROLYN QUATTROCKI
Deputy Attorney General

STATE OF MARYLAND
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

FACSIMILE NO.

WRITER'S DIRECT DIAL NO.

410-576-6584

March 31, 2021

TO: The Honorable Luke Clippinger
Chair, Judiciary Committee

FROM: The Office of the Attorney General

RE: (Crossover) SB0309 – Handgun Permit – Preliminary Approval – **Letter of Opposition**

The Office of the Attorney General urges the Judiciary 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, allows someone unskilled and untrained in the safe possession of firearms to spend upwards of four months wearing, carrying, or transporting the firearm before completing necessary and effective public safety training.

The recent mass shooting in Atlanta¹ warns the State to cautiously review legislation relating to handguns. Unlike advocates who argue that handguns are solely for self-protection, the recent Atlanta shooting illustrates the dangers of these handguns. These handguns can be used for mass shootings.

Senate Bill 309 requires 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.

¹ See generally Richard Fausset & Neil Vigdor, *8 People Killed in Atlanta-Area Massage Parlor Shootings*, N.Y. Times (updated Mar. 19, 2021), <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/16/us/atlanta-shootings-massage-parlor.html>.

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

cc: Committee Members