

**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 3, 2021

TO: The Honorable Luke Clippinger  
Chair, Judiciary Committee

FROM: The Office of the Attorney General

RE: HB0966 – Public Safety – Handgun Qualification License – Training Exemption -  
- **Oppose**

---

House Bill 966 amends Section 5-117.1 of the Public Safety Article to exempt Delaware, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, and Washington, D.C. law enforcement officers from the firearms safety training course normally required to obtain a Handgun Qualification License (“HQL”). Under existing law, HQL applicants are exempted from the firearms training course if they have (1) completed a certified firearms training course approved by the Secretary; (2) completed a course of instruction in competency and safety in the handling of firearms prescribed by the Department of Natural Resources; (3) are a qualified handgun instructor; (4) are an honorably discharged member of the armed forces of the United States or National Guard; (5) are an employee of an armored care company and have a wear and carry permit; or (6) lawfully own a regulated firearm.

We believe the majority of police officers in neighboring states would likely qualify for a firearms safety training course exemption under the six grounds in existing law. Moreover, merely because someone is a police officer in a neighboring state does not necessarily mean the person warrants an HQL training course exemption here in Maryland. Different states have divergent views of who is qualified to serve as a police officer. Because the vetting process for police in neighboring jurisdictions is a virtual unknown, Maryland should not exempt Delaware, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, and Washington, D.C. law enforcement officers from the firearms safety training course normally required to obtain an HQL.

For these reasons, the Office of the Attorney General urges an unfavorable report on HB 966.

cc: Members of the Judiciary Committee