

Written Testimony Supporting Maryland House Bill 845

Paul Cheakalos
Montgomery County, District 14
Support for House Bill 845

March 3, 2021

Thank you for allowing me to express my concerns regarding House Bill 845. I am writing to ask you to support House Bill 845, which will allow personal protection and/or self-defense a “good and substantial” reason to carry a firearm in Maryland.

Currently, 42 states, plus the District of Columbia are considered shall-issue, with 17 currently allowing constitutional-carry (effective May 5, 2021, Utah will become the 18th state to allow constitutional carry). A Maryland resident can obtain a permit from multiple “shall-issue” states (including Utah, Virginia, Florida, and DC) by meeting the minimum requirements, which typically include attending a training course and having a clean criminal record with no history of violence; however, Maryland requires a “good and substantial” reason beyond self-defense to allow a resident to carry.

Having taken several firearms safety courses, including Maryland’s HQL course, I can safely argue that proper firearm training can help reduce, if not, eliminate gun-related accidents, so I support keeping the Maryland State Police approved course as a requirement for certification. I also support Maryland’s current Wear and Carry requirements listed on the State Police website under the “Who Should Apply” section, **except for bullet 6**, which requires a “...good and substantial reason to wear, carry, or transport a handgun...”¹

Safety is extremely important to me and my family. According to CountyStat (Montgomery County’s Performance Management and Data Analytics page²), the average response time to a 911 call is about 8.21 minutes (about 10 minutes nationwide). In an emergency, every second counts. Allowing individuals to carry will allow immediate protection from danger, as opposed to waiting for help (in certain situations, even a few seconds may be too late, or an individual may not have the opportunity to call for help, especially in the presence of an aggressor).

While I understand Maryland intends to keep us safe with tough permit laws, I find that tougher laws tend to favor the criminal. For example: a law-abiding citizen will follow the law; however, a criminal will most likely ignore the law and continue to use illegally obtained firearms in a crime with zero remorse. Therefore, it would be counterproductive to keep laws that prohibit law-abiding citizens from carrying a legally obtained firearm for self-defense.

In conclusion, I strongly urge the Maryland House to issue a favorable report for House Bill 845. Thank you again for giving me the opportunity to express my concerns.

Sincerely,

Paul Cheakalos
Montgomery County – District 14

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<https://mdsp.maryland.gov/Organization/Pages/CriminalInvestigationBureau/LicensingDivision/Firearms/WearandCarryPermit.aspx>

² <https://reports.data.montgomerycountymd.gov/stat/goals/qucz-i7xn/vkh3-qxu6/aiwx-jr7x>