



BILL NO: Senate Bill 456
TITLE: Firearms - Handgun Qualification License - Firearms Orientation Component
COMMITTEE: Judicial Proceedings
HEARING DATE: February 16, 2022
POSITION: **OPPOSE**

The Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence (MNADV) is the state domestic violence coalition that brings together victim service providers, allied professionals, and concerned individuals for the common purpose of reducing intimate partner and family violence and its harmful effects on our citizens. **MNADV urges the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee to issue an unfavorable report on SB 456.**

Senate Bill 456 seeks to remove the imperative training requirement that a firearm owner demonstrate the ability to safely operate and handle a firearm. COMAR explains that the ability to safely operate and handle a firearm requirement includes “a practice component in which the applicant safely fires *at least* one round of live ammunition.”¹ The practice component is a critical training requirement that should not be removed or made optional in statute. If this training requirement is not required, the sole training requirement for a handgun qualification license would be a minimum of 4 hours of classroom instruction. There would be no requirement in the State of Maryland that an individual with a handgun qualification license actually demonstrate the ability to safely operate and handle a firearm. Removing the demonstrative component for the handgun qualification license would be akin to removing the road test for a Maryland driver’s license.

Guns are used in a variety of ways by perpetrators of domestic violence. Guns are not only used by abusers to shoot their victims but are used to threaten a victim, intimidate a victim, and used to pistol-whip a victim.² Approximately 4.5 million American women alive today have been threatened by intimate partners with firearms and 1 million have been shot or shot at by their abusers.³ Women who are threatened or assaulted with a gun are 20 times more likely than other women to be murdered.⁴

For the above stated reasons, the **Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence urges an unfavorable report on SB 456.**

¹ COMAR 29.03.01.29(C)(4) (emphasis added).

² Zeoli, A.M., *Non-Fatal Firearm Uses in Domestic Violence*, The Battered Women’s Justice Project, 2017.

<https://www.preventdvgunviolence.org/nonfatal-gun-dv-zeoli-.pdf>

³ Sorenson, S. B., & Schut, R. A. (2016). Nonfatal gun use in intimate partner violence: A systematic review of the literature. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*

⁴ Campbell, J. C., Webster, D., Koziol-McLain, J., Block, C. R., Campbell, D., Curry, M. A., Gary, F., McFarlane, J., Sachs, C., Sharps, P., Ulrich, Y., & Wilt, S. A. (2003, November). *Assessing Risk Factors for Intimate Partner Homicide*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice (NIJ). p.16. <https://www.fcadv.org/sites/default/files/Campbell%2020032.pdf>