



2A Maryland

2A@2AMaryland.org

House Bill 1174

Public Safety – Permit to Carry, Wear, or Transport a Handgun - Qualifications FAVORABLE

The provision for a “good and substantial” reason for a permit to wear and carry a handgun was added to the Maryland wear and carry statute a half century ago. It has been a nebulous undefined term ever since and subject to the whim of each administration in its interpretation.

In matters of law, the Maryland General Assembly has an obligation to make the intent clear and unequivocal. Anything less is a disservice to the citizens of Maryland.

HB 1174 seeks to end the 50-year-old political football game by adding the terms “person protection” and “self-defense” to better conform the statute to existing case law. It will also recognize that law-abiding citizens have a natural and God given right not only to self-defense, but also the means to defend themselves and their loved ones.

No one will dispute the fact that criminals carry firearms outside the law, in defiance of the law. We, the law-abiding citizens of Maryland, simply need and deserve the right to carry firearms for personal protection and self-defense within the law.

We strongly urge a favorable report.

Respectfully,

John H. Josselyn, Director
2A Maryland

J. JOSEPH CURRAN, JR.
ATTORNEY GENERAL

CARMEN M. SHEPARD
DEPUTY ATTORNEY GENERAL

DONNA HILL STATON
DEPUTY ATTORNEY GENERAL

OFFICES OF



THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

DEPARTMENT OF MARYLAND STATE POLICE

1201 REISTERSTOWN ROAD
PIKESVILLE, MARYLAND 21208
(410) 653-4223

FAX (410) 653-4270

Toll Free 1-800-525-5555

BETTY STEMLEY SCONION
PRINCIPAL COUNSEL

MARK H. BOWEN
ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL

DONALD E. HOFFMAN
ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL

H. SCOTT CURTIS
ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL

RICHARD M. KASTENDIECK
ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL

March 31, 1999

Mr. John H. Josselyn
Associated Gun Clubs of Baltimore, Inc.
P.O. Box 20102
Towson, Maryland 21284-0102

Dear Mr. Josselyn:

I have been asked by Attorney General Curran to respond to your letter of March 2, 1999. In your letter, you asked for clarification as to certain issues codified by existing Maryland law. In point of fact, with one exception, the nine issues you list are not codified in the Annotated Code of Maryland. To the extent that these issues have been addressed by Maryland's appellate courts, I will provide you with the relevant case citations.

1 & 2) Police responsibility and/or obligation to protect and defend private citizens, to protect society as a whole.

The Maryland State Police is charged, in Article 88B, Section 3 of the Annotated Code with "the general duty to safeguard the lives and safety of all persons within the State, to protect property, and to assist in securing to all persons the equal protection of the laws." However, the Maryland Court of Appeals has determined that police do not have a duty to protect individual citizens from the actions of other citizens absent a special relationship between the police and the victim or the police and the offender. See, Ashburn v. Anne Arundel County, 306 Md. 617 (1986)

3) Police civil liability when response time is too slow to prevent injury or death.

This issue is not addressed in statute. I have been able to find no appellate case law imposing such liability.

4) Circumstances under which the police can use deadly force to protect life.

This issue is not addressed in statute. In Tennessee v. Garner, 471 U.S. 1 (1985), the Supreme Court ruled that the use of deadly force was constitutionally permissible to protect the life of the officer or the life of another.

5) Circumstances under which the police can use deadly force to protect property.

This issue is not addressed in statute. There is no authority for a police officer to use deadly force to protect property.

6) Circumstances under which private citizens can use deadly force to protect life.

This issue is not addressed in statute. A private citizen may use deadly force in self defense or defense of another if death or serious bodily harm is threatened. The citizen must have reasonable grounds to believe himself, or another, in apparent immediate danger of death or serious bodily harm. See, Guerriero v. State, 213 Md. 545 (1957)

7) Circumstances under which private citizens can use deadly force to protect property.

This issue is not addressed in statute. There is no authority for a private citizen to use deadly force to protect property.

8) Circumstances under which private citizens have an obligation to retreat when confronted by an intruder in the home.

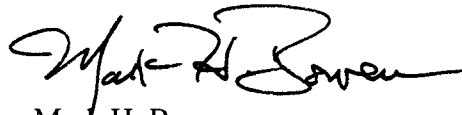
This issue is not addressed in statute. There is no duty to retreat if one is attacked in his or her own home: See, Redcross v. State of Maryland, 121 Md.App. 320 (1998).

9) Circumstances under which private citizens have an obligation to retreat when confronted by an attacker on a public street or in a public place.

This issue is not addressed in statute. Generally, Maryland law does impose a duty to retreat when confronted in a public place. See, Redcross v. State of Maryland, 121 Md.App. 320 (1998).

This letter does not constitute an official opinion of the Office of the Attorney General. You may wish to consult with your own counsel to obtain detailed advice on the issues you have raised.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark H. Bowen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mark" being the most prominent.

Mark H. Bowen
Assistant Attorney General
Maryland State Police