

Written Testimony of Katie Novotny in support of HB1174

March 06, 2022

I am a member of Multiple Gun Rights organizations. Maryland Shall Issue, Associated Gun Clubs, Maryland State Rifle and Pistol Association, and the National Rifle Association. I am a certified Range Safety Officer with the NRA. I compete in multiple shooting events such as Steel Challenge, 3-gun, small bore, and vintage military rifle matches. I am an avid firearms collector. I support HB1174.

Currently, 41 states and DC have Shall Issue laws, and 21 states have Permitless Carry. Clearly Maryland is on the wrong side of history here. As more states move towards liberal licensing practices, we have more data proving that concealed carry holders do not contribute to crime. The January 2019 study published by the American College of Surgeons found this conclusion: "This study demonstrated no statistically significant association between the liberalization of state level firearm carry legislation over the last 30 years and the rates of homicides or other violent crime. Policy efforts aimed at injury prevention and the reduction of firearm-related violence should likely investigate other targets for potential intervention." <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S107275151832074X>

There is data available for many states crime rates before and after the introduction of shall issue permitting. Florida, and especially Dade County, tracked crime rates and other relevant data from the time they enacted carry reform in 1987 until August 31, 1992. They stopped at that point because it was clear there was no need to because of how rare incidents with permit holders were. The numbers from this study were as follows: A total of 6 permit holders were convicted of perpetrating crimes with firearms; Just 13 permit holders used their firearms to thwart or attempt to thwart crimes; and there was no known incident of a permit holder intervening in an incompetent or dangerous manner, such as shooting an innocent bystander by mistake. This data was taken from the study titled "Shall Issue": The New Wave of Concealed Handgun Permit Laws" <http://www.davekopel.org/2A/LawRev/Shall%20Issue.pdf>

Currently Maine, Vermont and New Hampshire are rated as the three safest states, and they are all Constitutional Carry. From 2014 to 2018, Illinois had an average of over 189,000 active permits. Over that same period, no one has been convicted of committing a crime with his permitted concealed handgun. <https://crimeresearch.org/2018/06/illinois-more-evidence-that-concealed-handgun-permits-holders-are-extremely-law-abiding/> In 2017, Milwaukee, Wisconsin's police union president stated that they had not arrested even one permit holder since they went shall issue in 2011.

Studies also show that concealed carry permit holders are more law abiding than even police officers. <https://www.dailywire.com/news/report-concealed-carry-permit-holders-are-most-law-aaron-bandler> Firearms violations rates for police officers are at 16.5 per 100,000. In Texas and Florida, for permit holders, that rate is only 2.4 per 100,000.

It is abundantly clear that there is no public safety reason to restrict firearm licenses to law abiding citizens. Furthermore, it has been proven unconstitutional in *Wrenn v. District of Columbia*. That case struck down DC's "good reason" requirement, making DC Shall Issue. It is only a matter of time before the same happens in Maryland.

This state only issues permits to those with "good and substantial" reasons. Aside from working as security, and some other narrow allowances, the method most popularly used in my experience, is by proving you carry large sums of money or valuable property, and proving you own a business. Yet this state only allows deadly force to defend your person, not your possessions. You may be issued a permit because of your possessions, but you may not use it because of them. You may use deadly force to defend your person, but you may not be issued a permit because of that, with the exception of proving you have specific, credible threats. The ordinary danger of living or working in some of the nation's most violent neighborhoods does not apply. The law-abiding citizens of this state deserve to protect themselves against the ever-growing violence in our urban areas.

Finally, with the upcoming decision expected in *NYSRA v. Bruen* which is likely to strike down New York's "Good reason" requirement, which is nearly identical to Maryland's permitting scheme, this is likely to not matter. The decision to strike down the unconstitutional and discriminatory requirement is forthcoming.

Because of these reasons above, I request a favorable report.

Katherine Novotny
District 35B
443-617-7568
Katie.Novotny@hotmail.com