

Please **SUPPORT** House Bill 590
Handgun Permit Holders – Authority to Carry Handguns in State Parks and Forests

In case you haven't heard, there's bears in Ellicott City and greater Howard County^{[1][2]} For awhile it seemed like everyone in the neighborhood around Mount Hebron high school were posting images of bears to the NextDoor app. But this influx of potentially dangerous animals doesn't stop there. According to Maryland's Department of Natural Resources, coyotes (yes, like those in Western movies) are now found in ALL Maryland counties.^[3] It was even postulated that a rash of missing cats in my neighborhood could be blamed on a coyote. Where do these creatures mostly live? The State Parks such as Patapsco of course; right where they could easily have an unfortunate encounter with a person.

Now don't get me wrong, I love nature, I have never hunted and I respect the fact that wild animals roam as they wish. But what if these animals present a threat to people due to diseases such as rabies or a sudden recognition that the small children playing near the woods appear to be an easy food source? During my life I have trained in 6 forms of martial arts. How many of those do you think are effective against a bear? A rabid raccoon? A coyote? Most lawmakers probably assume that the desire to carry a firearm for self-defense stems from human threats; well, that certainly isn't my case. I would like to have options for my protection, the protection of my family and those around me. I have absolutely no desire to employ a firearm anymore so than someone wants to use the first aid kit or fire extinguisher in the trunk of their car but I'd still like the comfort of knowing that its there just in case.

I have an adventurous outdoors family and it seems we always end up in places where you can see no other human from horizon to horizon even in supposedly populated areas. Options. All I request is self-defense options based upon these real world situations without legal worry.

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[1] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pcBLvyuP91w> "Black Bear in Historical Ellicott City 6/23/21"

[2] <https://patch.com/maryland/columbia/brown-bear-spotted-meandering-around-clarksville-village>

[3] https://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Pages/hunt_trap/coyote.aspx