



**2A Maryland**

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## **House Bill 590**

### **Handgun Permit Holders – Authority to Carry Handguns in State Parks & Forests FAVORABLE**

The prohibition on possessing firearms in State Parks and Forests has existed for many years. The reason for this prohibition is unclear and results in conflicts with some existing laws applicable to hunting and sport shooting.

Firearms can be possessed in those areas of State Parks and Forests which are open for hunting during hunting season. However, many of the State's Parks and Forest have camping areas and cabins which are used by hunters who are technically in violation of the law.

In most parks the camping areas and even the cabins are not located near local law enforcement and in many areas, there is no land line phone or cell service available. This makes it difficult to contact the local law enforcement agency should an emergency develop.

Based upon my years of experience renting a cabin the New Germany State Park during hunting season, the Natural Resources Park personnel and Natural Resources Police do not enforce the prohibition provided the firearms are not in open view. This "wink and nod" has worked quite well, but the fact remains that hunters and sportsmen still run the risk of being charged with a crime.

It should be noted that in many areas, black bears are common and mountain lions have been reported on occasion. Once you have traveled beyond the first mountain ridge, you have stepped back in time over a century and must fend for yourself should the need arise.

Persons with permits to wear and carry a firearm have demonstrated a remarkable record of compliance with the applicable laws, both here in Maryland and across the nation. Permit holders have gone through extensive background checks and training and they do not represent a threat to themselves or others.

We urge this Committee to return a favorable report on House Bill 590.

Respectfully,

John H. Josselyn, Director  
2A Maryland