



MARYLAND  
CATHOLIC  
CONFERENCE

February 22, 2023

HB 824

Public Safety - Regulated Firearms - Possession and Permits to Carry, Wear, and Transport a Handgun

House Judiciary Committee

Position: Favorable

The Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals, and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

House Bill 824 alters the disqualifiers for possession of a regulated firearm; altering the maximum fees, qualifications for issuance, and the renewal period for a permit to carry, wear, or transport a handgun; altering a provision of law to require, rather than authorize, the Secretary of State Police to revoke a certain permit on a finding that the holder does not meet certain qualifications.

The Catholic Church has a strong interest in public safety and keeping communities safe. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops states in response to rising violence that “[w]e have an obligation to respond. Violence – in our homes, our schools and streets, our nation and world – is destroying the lives, dignity and hopes of millions of our sisters and brothers.” To that point, the Church supports legislation that controls and strengthens regulations on firearms, and other such legislation that makes our communities safer. When community members are not in fear of their lives, they can live up to their God-given potential and enrich the world around them. Every person has a right to life, and the Conference will continue to work to combat violence and promote a culture of peace.

The Conference appreciates your consideration and respectfully urges a **favorable** report for House Bill 824.