



2A Maryland

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**HOUSE BILL 1178
Handgun Permit Holders
Authority to Carry Handguns in State Parks and Forests
FAVORABLE**

We would like to believe that our State Parks and Forests and similar venues are locations where we and our families can recreate in a safe environment devoid of predators. Unfortunately, the murder of Rachel Morin on a Bel Air walking trail last year and the more recent murder of Laken Riley on a walking trail on the University of Georgia campus clearly demonstrate this is not the case.

I am quite familiar with the Northern Central Rail Trail which extends 21 miles from Cockeysville to the Maryland-Pennsylvania border. The trail is secluded and runs through forested areas. The surrounding terrain is such that cell phone coverage is unpredictable and long stretches of the trail have no nearby road or dwellings and no cell coverage whatsoever. These areas are also not readily accessible to emergency first responders.

Having hunted for years in the Savage River Forest of Garrett County, I can state with confidence that once a person has crossed the first mountain ridge, they might as well have stepped back in time two centuries. You must rely on your own survival skills and equipment at hand in an environment that can be unforgiving. Even if you find a cell signal, help is over 30 minutes away at best and hours or days at worst. You are at the mercy of the elements and potentially the predators, be they four legged or 2 legged.

As of March 1st, there are 182,556 citizens who have wear and carry permits. The evidence to date clearly demonstrates that they do not pose a threat to society. By passing HB 1178 the Maryland General Assembly will increase their safety by enabling them to properly defend not only themselves and their families, and perhaps you and yours as well.

We urge a favorable report on House Bill 1178.

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