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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

January 16, 2025

The Maryland State Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.
2 East Miller Senate Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Senate Bill 180: Public Safety - Handgun Permits - Expiration and Renewal Periods for Retired Law Enforcement Officer

Dear Chairman Smith and Members of the Committee,

Under current Maryland law, handgun permits are valid for a two-year period after the initial issue date and are valid for three-year periods thereafter. Currently, about 200,000 Maryland residents hold gun permits. This represents a massive increase in the number of permit holders in Maryland following the Supreme Court's *Bruen* decision.

The enormous increase in gun permits has caused a concomitantly enormous increase in the cost to the State of Maryland of monitoring whether the holders of gun permits continue to qualify to possess firearms. Every holder of a gun permit is the subject of a background check each year. This includes a federal background check and a review of 17 Maryland data bases. In addition, each permit holder has executed a HIPAA waiver, enabling the State to access the permit holder's mental health records, among other things. In addition, Maryland participates in the FBI's "Rap Back" system, in connection with which the Maryland State Police receive prompt notice of an arrest of a permit holder that has occurred anywhere in the United States. All of this background checking is both time consuming and expensive. Permit renewals add yet more expense as they are far more onerous and require far more administrative time on the part of the State Police.

Senate Bill 180 simply permits law enforcement officers who retired from their jobs in good standing to have their gun permit renewal period run for five years after the initial issue date instead of two years and similarly to have their renewal periods also last for five years instead of three years.

This is a narrowly focused bill that improves the process for handgun renewal for retired law enforcement officers, and recognizes their years of training, service and good standing.

It will also help to reduce the magnitude of the expense that the State Police will be put to as they deal with the logistics of handling renewals of gun permits for hundreds of thousands of Maryland citizens two years after permit issuance and every three years thereafter. Given the

ongoing background checks of all permit holders, certainly law enforcement officers who retired in good standing constitute a group who need not go through the renewal process every three years.

Some have suggested universally extending the three year renewal period to a five year renewal period for all 200,000 permit holders. This bill does not do that. It is limited to those permit holders who are well trained in their use of firearms and who have served the State with distinction and who have retired in good standing. It represents a reasonable measure to acknowledge the contributions of these retired law enforcement officers while at the same time reducing the cost to the taxpayers of the permit renewal process.

I appreciate the Committee's consideration of Senate Bill 180, would hope for a favorable vote and will be happy to answer any questions the Committee may have.