



HOUSE BILL 354

Criminal Law – Prohibitions on Wearing, Carrying, or Transporting a Handgun – Penalties

FAVORABLE

The 2022 the Supreme Court ruling in Bruen declared Maryland's six decade old "good and substantial" mandate to be unconstitutional. The Maryland General Assembly overreacted by passing several draconian bills, all directed at law-abiding Maryland gun owners.

One of many changes was an increased penalty for the simple wear and carry of a handgun without a permit. Even absent any other crime or criminal activity, upon conviction an otherwise law-abiding citizen is subject to a lifetime prohibition on the possession of a firearm.

The evidence has clearly demonstrated that the unfounded fears of the Maryland General Assembly would never become reality. Maryland's 202,413 carry permit holders have continued to obey the law, just as they had before the ruling in the Bruen case. Naturally, the criminal elements continued disregarding the law as they have for decades.

Many Maryland citizens simply do not have the financial resources needed to pay for the required fingerprints, expanded training courses, and increased permit fees mandated by the legislation. Nor do they have access to the training facilities necessary to complete the training. Most severely impacted are minorities who tend to have limited disposable income.

Provided no other criminal offense or activity is involved, House Bill 354 reduces the consequences for wearing and carrying a handgun to a monetary fine. This simple change is far more appropriate and will not compromise public safety.

2A Maryland strongly urges a favorable report on House Bill 354.

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