

House Bill 171

Retired Law Enforcement Officers Concealed Carry Permit

January 29, 2025

Mr. Chairman and distinguished committee members. I am retired Lieutenant Donald McCord of the Maryland State Police. I am representing the Maryland State Police Alumni Association as well as the Maryland Troopers Association. The Maryland State Police Alumni Association is comprised of approximately 1,500 retired Maryland State Troopers, with the Maryland Troopers Association be composed of approximately 2,700 sworn and retired State Troopers. My law enforcement career began in 1979 and I retired from the Maryland State Police after being injured in the line of duty in 1999. I am writing on behalf of our Associations in support of House Bill 171 extending the renewal time for a Maryland Handgun permit from three (3) years to (5) years for retired law enforcement officers (LEO).

To be issued a handgun permit as a retired LEO, one must retire in good standing, meaning, no adverse disciplinary/administrative/criminal charges or criminal record. Upon retirement, the retiree receives a retirement badge and identification card to confirm their service affiliation with a particular law enforcement agency. These individuals are further vetted through a rigorous background investigation, conducted by the Maryland State Police, confirming not only do they meet the legal standards of eligibility for a Handgun Permit but further as to their status as a retired LEO in good standing. According to statistics published by the Maryland State Police, over 85,000 concealed carry permits applications were received in 2023 alone (2024 numbers are not yet available).

In addition to keeping and maintaining the minimum standards required for a Maryland Handgun Permit, many of these retirees go on to achieve and maintain an additional level of proficiency. This is accomplished by applying for a national conceal carry permit under the Law Enforcement Officers Safety Act (LEOSA) of 2004. This level of certification requires the retired law enforcement officer to

meet the additional demands of an active duty LEO and shoot two (2) separate qualification courses (daylight and night fire) on an annual basis. This in essence forces the retiree to maintain the same basic level of handgun training and proficiency as an active duty LEO. It should be mentioned LEOSA may not be available to all retired LEO's based on their Agency's rules and regulations. In those instances, the retiree relies on the Maryland Handgun Permit to carry their weapon for self protection.

As noted above, the Maryland State Police Licensing Division processes and investigates, Handgun Permits submitted by the general public. According to statistics published by the Maryland State Police, over 85,000 Handgun Permit applications were received in 2023 alone (2024 numbers are not yet available). Retired LEO's make up a relatively small portion of these permits. By expanding the renewal time from 3 years to 5 years for retired LEO's, it reduces the burden on the Maryland State Police, Licensing Division of performing exhaustive, time consuming, follow up investigations on highly trained law enforcement officers who technically retired from active service but continue to serve their communities in various capacities with honor and distinction, as law abiding citizens.

There is a fiscal impact in regards to Maryland's Handgun Permits. The Maryland State Police alone, are charged by law, with conducting Handgun Permit investigations. With more than 85,000 applications a year, this presents a daunting task. A Trooper's time in man hours, basic/overtime salaries and fuel costs are just some of the expenses to be considered. The fee of a Handgun Permit is \$125.00 for an initial application, \$75.00 for renewal. So, in essence, expanding the renewal time from 3 years to 5 years would provide a positive fiscal return for the Maryland State Police and the State of Maryland, by reducing the needless expenditure of undue man hours and salaries for these investigations of known law-abiding individuals. Stated a little differently, given the volume of Handgun Permit applications processed, many of these investigations are conducted on an overtime basis to avoid taking time away from more pressing and time sensitive criminal investigations. This puts an even greater demand on overburdened police resources and budgets to investigate known, highly trained

individuals, who have served this State and their community with honor and distinction.

In addition to the points mentioned above, this Bill, if passed, would bring Maryland in line with our neighboring states of Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia with 5 year renewals of Handgun Permits.

As an active duty or retired law enforcement officer, we are held to a higher standard by the community at large, with much greater expectations of conduct and character, especially in times of trouble. Those of us who have chosen to pursue the path of a law enforcement officer, embrace these expectations and live their lives accordingly through a life of continued service to our communities and our fellow law enforcement officers. Given the dedicated years of service and sacrifice to the State of Maryland and our communities, we would appreciate your consideration in extending the renewal time for our Handgun Permits from 3 years to at least 5 years.

Thank you.

Lt (Ret) Donald J McCord

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