

Please find **FAVORABLE** HB 353
Public Safety – Handgun Permit Requirement – Repeal
(Maryland’s Constitutional Carry Act of 2025)

HB353 ensures that Marylanders can exercise their human rights without unnecessary barriers. By repealing the handgun permit requirement, the bill recognizes that citizens should not have to seek government permission to defend themselves, their families, or their property. Constitutional carry aligns Maryland with the growing number of states (now 29) that respect the Second Amendment as sufficient legal authority to carry a firearm.

The current permit system imposes financial and administrative burdens that disproportionately affect lower-income individuals. HB353 removes these obstacles, ensuring equal access to self-defense for all Marylanders, regardless of economic status. This change is especially important for vulnerable communities, where personal safety is a pressing concern.

HB353 strikes a balance by retaining important public safety measures, including:

- * Prohibiting individuals under 21 years old from carrying handguns.
- * Criminalizing carrying a handgun with the intent to injure or kill.
- * Introducing penalties for carrying a handgun while under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

These provisions demonstrate that HB353 prioritizes responsible firearm ownership while upholding individual freedoms.

The bill simplifies Maryland’s complex framework for lawful handgun carrying. By eliminating the patchwork of exceptions and situational requirements, HB353 reduces confusion and ensures that law-abiding citizens can exercise their human rights without fear of inadvertently violating the law.

While some may worry about the potential impact on public safety, evidence from other states with constitutional carry laws shows that such concerns are largely unfounded. Citizens overwhelmingly use firearms responsibly, and constitutional carry laws have not led to an increase in violent crime. Instead, these laws empower citizens to protect themselves and deter criminal activity.

House Bill 353 is a necessary step toward restoring and protecting the rights of Marylanders. It affirms the principle that the right to bear arms is not a privilege granted by the government but a fundamental right enshrined in the Constitution.

I respectfully urge the Committee to find HB353 favorable and join the growing number of states that recognize and respect constitutional carry.



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