



TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO HB 0353

**Public Safety – Handgun Permit Requirement – Repeal
(Maryland’s Constitutional Carry Act of 2025)**

Judiciary

UNFAVORABLE

TO: Hon. Luke Clippinger, Chair; Hon. J. Sandy Bartlett, Vice-Chair; and the Members of the House Judiciary Committee

FROM: Rev. Kenneth Phelps, Jr., The Episcopal Diocese of Maryland

DATE: February 11, 2025

Non-violence is at the core of Christian faith and practice. The teachings of Jesus – as contained in the New Testament – call the faithful to a rejection of a system of retribution and righteous violence and into an alternative way of living that is based on unconditional love of neighbor and accountability for the common good.

We cannot normalize violence or contemplate its use ever as being for the right. And we do not believe that the answer to escalating gun violence is an increase in the number of guns on the street.

Our bishops have called for common sense gun safety measures that enjoy the support of gun owners and non-gun owners alike, among them: handgun purchaser licensing; background checks on all gun purchasers; restrictions on gun ownership by domestic abusers; classification of gun trafficking as a federal crime; encouragement for the development of “smart gun” technology; and federal funding for research into gun violence prevention strategies. And, our Church has passed numerous resolutions calling for many of these measures.

It is the opinion of our Public Policy Network that this bill serves only to undermine the existing concealed carry standards of the State, making access to handguns that much easier and increasing the likelihood that they will be placed into the hands for those who should not carry in the first place. We also view this bill as another attempt to encourage and in turn increase the number of guns in circulation and also fear that it would be ripe for abuse by those who seek to obtain firearms by any means.

We request an unfavorable report.