



Senate Bill 667 Public Safety – Handgun Permits – Firearms Training Course Favorable

Background

For half a century, Maryland law required a “good and substantial” reason for a permit to wear and carry a handgun for self-defense. The term “good and substantial” was, and still is an undefined term, which led to decades of denials and abuse of citizens’ rights to self-defense.

“In New York State Rifle & Pistol Association, Inc. v. Bruen (2022), the Supreme Court ruled 6-3 that the Second Amendment protects an individual's right to carry a handgun for self-defense outside the home. The decision struck down New York's "proper cause" requirement for concealed-carry licenses and established a new standard: gun regulations must be consistent with the nation's historical tradition of firearm regulation.”

The language of the Court’s ruling applied equally to Maryland’s “good and substantial” language. On July 5, 2022, The Maryland State Police issued *Advisory LD-HPU-22-002 Suspension Of “Good And Substantial Reason” Standard For Md Wear & Carry Permits* which formally ended Maryland unconstitutional “good and substantial” requirement.

The thought of restoring the right of law-abiding citizens to wear and carry a handgun for self-defense and other lawful purposes drove some members of the Maryland General Assembly into a panic. House Bill 824 was a direct result of their misguided and unfounded belief that the Bruen decision would result in widespread violence, with wear and carry permit holders becoming vigilantes.

In fact, the result was just the opposite. Homicides which had reached a peak in 2022, declined in 2023, declined again in 2024, and yet again in 2025. This reduction happened despite the number of wear and carry permit holders increasing approximately tenfold during that same time period. Second Amendment and self-defense advocates’ assertions that wear and carry permit holders do not increase crime were proven to be correct.

Senate Bill 677
Favorable

As passed into law, House Bill 824 enumerated various topics to be incorporated into the existing required wear and carry permit training course. Some of the topics were and are irrelevant to the core purpose of wear and carry permit training. These topics were detrimental because they consumed an inordinate amount of time during the course with no commensurate benefit to the student, and by extension to the public.

On the Bill

Senate Bill 677 corrects the shortcomings of House Bill 824 by eliminating:

- Training which is duplicative of training topics contained in Maryland's Handgun Qualification License (HQL) training course requirements.
- Topics which are unrelated to wear and carry permits or permit training.

Senate Bill 677 improves the wear and carry course by adding the following areas of instruction:

- Handgun nomenclature and how to select the appropriate firearm for self-defense.
- Ammunition knowledge and defensive ammunition selection.
- Basic defense handgun skills which include:
 - Drawing a handgun from concealment.
 - Loading and stoppage remediation.
- Mindset, including responding to an attack and the aftermath of an attack.
- Handgun concealment and carry modes.

SB 677 retains classroom training on:

- State and federal firearm laws, including laws relating to:
 - Self-defense.
 - Defense of others.
 - Defense of property.
 - Home firearm safety.
 - Safe storage of firearms (while adding cleaning and maintenance)
 - Conflict de-escalation and resolution.
 - Anger management.
 - Suicide prevention.

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Senate Bill 677 retains the firearm qualification component, which includes a live-fire shooting exercise on a firing range and requires the applicant to demonstrate:

- Safe handling of a handgun.
- Shooting proficiency with a handgun.

We strongly urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 677.

Respectfully,

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