

SB-0677_WMSC_kelkye_FAV_2026.pdf

Uploaded by: Ben Kelkye

Position: FAV



Ben Kelkye, President
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February 27, 2026

Honorable Members of the
Maryland Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Md. 21401

**Subject: SB-0677 Public Safety-Handgun Permits-Firearms Training Course
SUPPORT**

Dear Honorable Senators:

As the President of the Western Maryland Sportsmen's Coalition, Inc., I am honored to represent this organization, which is made up of numerous hunting clubs and sportsmen's associations. The Coalition consists of thousands of individual members who reside throughout Garrett, Allegany, Washington, Frederick, and Carroll Counties. In my role, I collaborate closely with the leadership teams of these organizations, striving to ensure that the interests and achievements of sportsmen and sportswomen in Maryland's five most western counties are recognized and promoted. Together, we work for the benefit and advancement of our member clubs and associations, supporting the outdoor traditions and community values that define Western Maryland.

On March 3, 2026, the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee will be hearing the advantages and disadvantages of **SB-0677 - Public Safety-Handgun Permits-Firearms Training Course**.

I am a certified instructor in Maryland's required firearms training course. In that capacity I often communicate with other instructors that present this course of study to students seeking to learn proper techniques for the wear and carrying of a handgun. I am one of the few Master Firearms Training instructors in the U.S. and have trained thousands of students. It is my experience that there is a common desire of trainers and students alike that more practical topics relating directly to the basic skills and techniques of wearing and carrying a handgun need to be incorporated into the training lesson plan. Senate Bill-0677 seeks to achieve this.

Through my many years of teaching, I have arrived at the conclusion and firm belief that education is empowerment. As the elected representative of the Western Maryland Sportsmen's Coalition, Inc. and together with the sportsmen and sportswomen of Western Maryland, ***we strongly urge you to support and vote favorably on SB-0677.***

Respectfully,

Ben Kelkye

President

Western Maryland Sportsmen's Coalition, Inc.

Ben Kelkye	President, WMSC, President Frederick County Sportsmen's Council
Jerry Zembower	President, Garrett & Allegany Sportsmen's Association
Joe Winter	President, Washington County Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs
Matt Guilfoyle	President, Carroll County Sportsmen's Association

Garrett

Allegany

Washington

Frederick

Carroll

SB0677_Testimony_2A_Maryland.pdf

Uploaded by: John Josselyn

Position: FAV



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.

Senate Bill 677
Favorable

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,

John H. Josselyn
2A Maryland
NRA Certified Instructor
Range Safety Officer
Maryland State Police QHIL 2016-0082
Glock Certified Armorer
03/03/2026

SB-0677_WCFSC_winter_FAV_2026.pdf

Uploaded by: Joseph Winter

Position: FAV



Washington County Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs, Inc.

Joe Winter, President
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February 27, 2026

Honorable Members of the
Maryland Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Md. 21401

**Subject: SB-0677 Public Safety-Handgun Permits-Firearms Training Course
SUPPORT**

Dear Honorable Senators:

On March 03, 2026, the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee will be hearing the advantages and disadvantages of **SB-0677 (Public Safety-Handgun Permits-Firearms Training Course)**.

My name is Joe Winter, and I am the current President of the Washington County Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs, Inc. Our organization includes multiple hunting clubs and sportsmen's associations throughout Washington County. As President, I collaborate with the leaders of these organizations to support and represent the sportsmen and sportswomen across Washington County. I have particular expertise in the subject matter of this bill due to my experience as a former Commander of the Firearms Training Unit of the United States Park Police, a Federal Law Enforcement Agency Headquartered in Washington, D.C. of which I am now proudly retired.

The proposed bill acknowledges the critical need for individuals who wish to wear and carry a handgun to be equipped with foundational skills and essential knowledge. By emphasizing instruction in proper techniques, the legislation ensures that those pursuing a handgun permit are thoroughly prepared in the core aspects of safe and responsible handgun handling.

Together with the sportsmen and sportswomen of Washington County, I strongly urge you to support and vote favorably on HB-1063.

Respectfully,

Joe Winter
President
Washington County Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs, Inc.

"Sportsmen & Conservationists, working together..."

Testimony in Support of SB 677.pdf

Uploaded by: Karla Mooney

Position: FAV

Testimony in Support of SB 677 – Public Safety – Handgun Permits – Firearms Training Course

As a firearms instructor who currently teaches all of the amended training requirements, I have significant concerns about mandated training programs. In practice, these requirements can become a “race to the bottom,” where some of the least-qualified instructors attempt to profit from mandatory coursework. For that reason, I believe broad, poorly structured mandates should generally be avoided.

That said, I do believe the core elements outlined in SB 677 are absolutely necessary as a foundation for anyone beginning the training required to carry a firearm for self-defense. The bill clearly identifies essential training components that would, in effect, disqualify many unqualified QHIC instructors from teaching. While removing instructors who lack proper certification may be challenging, I believe this can be addressed by allowing a reasonable transition period—such as one year—for current instructors to improve their knowledge, meet certification standards, and requalify.

I do have concerns regarding the renewal process for training and certification, as this is not clearly addressed in the bill. Clarification on renewal requirements would strengthen the legislation and ensure ongoing competency and accountability.

Overall, despite my reservations, I am able to give SB 677 a favorable report due to its emphasis on baseline training standards that promote responsible and informed firearm carry.

Karla Mooney

NRA Multi-Discipline Instructor

Maryland State Director, Women for Gun Rights

Citizen of District 29C

MSI Testimony on SB 677.pdf

Uploaded by: Mark Pennak

Position: FAV



March 03, 2026

WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF MARK W. PENNAK, PRESIDENT, MSI, IN SUPPORT OF SB 677

I am the President of Maryland Shall Issue (“MSI”). Maryland Shall Issue is a Section 501(c)(4) all-volunteer, non-partisan, non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation and advancement of gun owners’ rights in Maryland. It seeks to educate the community about the right of self-protection, the safe handling of firearms, and the responsibility that goes with carrying a firearm in public. I am also an attorney and an active member of the Bar of Maryland and of the Bar of the District of Columbia. I recently retired from the United States Department of Justice, where I practiced law for 33 years in the Courts of Appeals of the United States and in the Supreme Court of the United States. I am an expert in Maryland firearms law, federal firearms law and the law of self-defense. I am also a Maryland State Police certified handgun instructor for the Maryland Wear and Carry Permit and the Maryland Handgun Qualification License (“HQL”) and a certified NRA instructor in rifle, pistol, personal protection in the home, personal protection outside the home and in muzzle loader. I appear today as President of MSI in SUPPORT of SB 677.

Existing Law and The Bill:

As amended in 2023 as part of HB 824, 2023 Maryland Session Laws, Ch. 651, codified in part at MD Code, Public Safety, § 5-306(a-1), current Maryland imposes a long list of training requirements that applicants for a Maryland wear and carry permit must satisfy. This Bill incorporates and preserves the most sensible of those requirements, including classroom instruction on “State and federal firearm laws, including laws relating to: 1. self-defense; 2. defense of others; 3. defense of property” as well instruction on “the locations where a person is prohibited from possessing a firearm regardless of whether the person possesses a permit issued under this subtitle.” The Bill also retains instruction on “conflict de-escalation and resolution; anger management; and suicide prevention” and leaves untouched the scored, live-fire requirement that demonstrates “safe handling of a handgun; and shooting proficiency with a handgun.” The Bill retains the requirement of 16 hours of training and continues to require instruction on “the law concerning armed trespass under § 6-411 of the Criminal Law Article” and on “the locations where a person is prohibited from possessing a firearm regardless of whether the person possesses a permit issued under this subtitle.

What the Bill adds are the following amendments to the substantive training requirements imposed by Section 5-306(a-1). These training requirements both incorporate existing requirements found in Section 5-306(a-1) and add new requirements, providing:

FIREARM TRAINING, INCLUDING:

1. HANDGUN NOMENCLATURE AND SELECTING A HANDGUN FOR SELF-DEFENSE;
2. AMMUNITION KNOWLEDGE AND DEFENSIVE AMMUNITION SELECTION;
3. BASIC DEFENSIVE HANDGUN SKILLS;
4. DRAWING A HANDGUN FROM CONCEALMENT;
5. LOADING AND STOPPAGE REMEDIATION;
6. MINDSET, INCLUDING RESPONDING TO AN ATTACK AND THE AFTERMATH OF AN ATTACK;
7. HANDGUN CONCEALMENT AND CARRY MODES
8. HOME FIREARM SAFETY; AND
9. SAFE FIREARM STORAGE, CLEANING, AND MAINTENANCE;

Discussion:

This is a gun bill that makes sense. While many in the General Assembly may remain opposed to the Supreme Court's ruling in *NYSRPA v. Bruen*, 597 U.S. 1 (2022), the fact remains that *Bruen* is the law of the land. As a result of that ruling, Maryland currently has approximately 200,000 carry permit holders who carry loaded handguns outside the home. That is reality. The training amendments that would be enacted by this Bill are real-life skills and practices that these 200,000 carry permit holders should understand, both for their own protection and the protection of those around them. Instruction **for permit holders** should be focused directly on skills and knowledge for carrying outside the home lawfully and safely, not instruction on multiple facets of State and federal firearms law that have little or no direct application to carry outside the home.

For example, Maryland law, as amended in 2023 by HB 824, requires that a permit holder carry concealed. See MD Code, Public Safety, § 5-307(b). Such concealed carry can be done safely in multiple ways but such carry, improperly performed, can also put the permit holder and those around her at unnecessary risk. This Bill addresses that risk by requiring instruction on DRAWING A HANDGUN FROM CONCEALMENT. Similarly, "BASIC DEFENSIVE HANDGUN SKILLS" and "MINDSET," as itemized by this Bill are critically important to the lawful use of lethal force for the defense of self and of others. LOADING AND STOPPAGE REMEDIATION are important skills during active self-defense. How to clear a jam or when to do a magazine swap in high-pressure situations can be lifesaving.

MINDSET training is especially critical because it will often spell the difference between success and failure. Mindset training will enhance the ability of the permit holder to be situationally aware of emerging threats and respond in ways (such utilizing basic OODA Loop¹ decision-making skills) that may even eliminate the need for lethal force. Mindset training goes hand in hand with "conflict de-escalation and resolution," a training requirement retained by this Bill. That sort of instruction is vital to ensure that lethal force is used only as a last resort and, if lethal force is used, then such use is successful in defending innocent lives. It is not enough to teach the law. That instruction must be combined with instruction in the DEFENSIVE HANDGUN SKILLS and MINDSET directly

¹ "OODA" refers to "Observe, Orient, Decide and Act," a decision-making model for combat famously developed by United States Air Force Colonel John Boyd in the early 1970s. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/OODA_loop.

associated with carrying a loaded firearm outside the home. This Bill ensures that sort of training.

The existing training items set aside by this Bill are either duplicative of training retained by the Bill (e.g., HOME FIREARM SAFETY and SAFE STORAGAGE) or previously received in Handgun Qualification License training or far less focused on carry than the training requirements imposed by this Bill. For example, the Bill repeals requirement training “for reporting a loss or theft of a firearm to a law enforcement agency as required by § 5–146 of this title.” Knowledge of the requirement may be important but virtually every carry permit applicant already has a Handgun Qualification License in which this subject is covered by the required training. Specifically, the HQL statute, MD Code, Public Safety, § 5-117.1(d)(3) already requires 4 hours of training, including “classroom instruction on: 1. State firearm law; 2. home firearm safety; and 3. handgun mechanisms and operation, and a firearms orientation component that demonstrates the person's safe operation and handling of a firearm.” This Bill builds on that instruction by requiring focused training in BASIC DEFENSIVE HANDGUN SKILLS. Repeating HQL instruction is pointless and a waste of valuable instruction time for carry permit applicants.

Other requirements imposed by current law have very limited application to concealed carry outside the home. Very few (if any) carry permit applicants need or would find useful instruction on the legal complexities imposed by the National Firearms Act of 1934 concerning “the types of firearms that require a special permit or registration to acquire or possess under State or federal law,” the instruction required by current law. The relatively few permit holders who acquire NFA items (e.g., short-barreled rifles or machine guns) become fully aware of these requirements during the NFA application process imposed by federal law. Permit holders carry **ordinary handguns**, not NFA items. Requiring NFA instruction for **every** carry permit applicant wastes valuable instruction time that can be better focused on the skills necessary to carry an ordinary handgun outside the home.

Similarly, instruction on straw purchases, required by current law, has nothing to do with concealed **carry** because straw purchases relate solely to the **acquisition** of arms, not the carry of arms. Carry permit applicants have almost always **already acquired** the handguns that they wish to carry. Many are highly experienced with firearms. Such prior acquisition means that these applicants have already received instruction regarding illegal straw purchasing in obtaining a Handgun Qualification License, a license that **is directly** connected to the **acquisition** of a handgun. In any event, the ban on straw purchases **is expressly stated** on federal form 4473 and State form 77R that **every** handgun purchaser must read and fill out on **each** purchase of a regulated firearm.

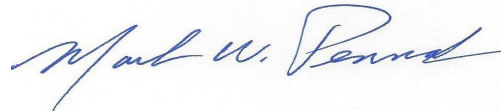
Specifically, Question 2 on the 77R asks: “Are you participating in a straw purchase of a regulated firearm? (Straw purchase means a transaction in which an individual uses another person, known as the straw purchaser, to complete the application to purchase a regulated firearm, take initial possession of that firearm and subsequently transfer that firearm to the first individual.)” Similarly, Question 21a. on the federal form 4473 asks if the purchaser is “the actual transferee/buyer,” explaining that “You are not the actual transferee/buyer if you are acquiring any of the firearm(s) on behalf of another person.”

Straw purchasers engage in such illegal conduct (a felony under federal law and a major misdemeanor under State law) despite this **actual notice**. Requiring instruction on straw purchases for permit holders will not affect straw purchasing in the slightest.

Finally, carrying a firearm outside the home does not require instruction on the disarmament that may be required by protective orders and ERPO orders, as required by current law. Individuals subject to such orders are uniformly informed of the disarmament requirement during that process. What permit holders do need is training on the matters added by this Bill.

Again, the Bill makes sense. We urge a favorable report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mark W. Pennak". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each name being capitalized and prominent.

Mark W. Pennak
President, Maryland Shall Issue, Inc.
mpennak@marylandshallissue.org

Testimony in support of SB0677 - Public Safety – H

Uploaded by: Richard KAP Kaplowitz

Position: FAV

SB0677_RichardKaplowitz_FAV

03/03/2026

Richard Keith Kaplowitz
Frederick, MD 21703

TESTIMONY ON SB#0677- POSITION: FAVORABLE

Public Safety – Handgun Permits – Firearms Training Course

TO: Chair Smith, Jr., Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB#0677, **Public Safety – Handgun Permits – Firearms Training Course**

This bill adds to the requirement for the firearms training course requirements to include:

- handgun nomenclature and selecting a handgun for self-defense
- ammunition knowledge and defensive ammunition selection
- basic defensive handgun skills
- 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
- ... home firearm safety
- safe firearm storage, cleaning, and maintenance

This bill will meet these goals by altering the requirements for a certain firearms training course that an applicant for a permit to carry, wear, or transport a handgun must successfully complete.

This bill does not restrict rights under the Second Amendment but ensures that the person who will carry, wear, or transport a handgun is fully trained in safety and knowledge needed to support legal and responsible gun ownership.

I respectfully urge this committee to return an favorable report on SB#0677.

SB677 2026 Bohart Testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Russell Bohart

Position: FAV

To whom it may concern,

I would like to express my support for this bill as it further refines the required training for a Handgun Permit applicant. I believe that the topics crossed out, while important to know in the situation when they may apply, are not as urgent or relevant to someone getting their carry permit. In fact I have not had any students who these topics applied to yet.

A person applying to get their carry permit should understand the equipment they are going to be responsible for, how to use that equipment and when to use that equipment. I liken it to a drivers license. Driver training is about operating the equipment and the rules of the road; not how forfeit your license should it be revoked after bad behavior.

--Russ Bohart

Owner, Responsible Firearms Training, LLC

SB0677_kasuba_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Thomas Kasuba

Position: FAV

Please find **FAVORABLE SB677**
Public Safety – Handgun Permits – Firearms Training Course

This bill modernizes Maryland’s handgun permit training requirements by shifting the focus toward **practical defensive competence and real-world skills** rather than excessive regulatory instruction. The revised curriculum places greater emphasis on handgun nomenclature, ammunition selection, defensive shooting skills, drawing from concealment, stoppage remediation, and post-incident mindset. These are the skills that matter most if a citizen is ever forced to defend themselves.

By focusing on applied skills such as responding to an attack, de-escalation, and safe firearm handling under stress — this bill strengthens public safety in a meaningful way. Permit holders will not merely understand the law; they will be better equipped to avoid conflict, safely carry, and competently handle a defensive firearm if ever confronted with a real-world threat.

By prioritizing safe handling, real defensive techniques, and scenario-based preparedness, this bill enhances public safety. Well-trained, competent permit holders are safer citizens. Practical training reduces negligent discharges, improves decision-making under stress, and reinforces responsible carry practices.

SB 677 strikes the right balance: it preserves strong safety components while ensuring that the required training meaningfully prepares individuals for lawful self-defense. For these reasons, I respectfully request a favorable report on SB 677.

Thomas J. Kasuba (registered Democrat)
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February 27, 2026