

House Bill 1339 Handgun Roster Reform

UNFAVORABLE

Maryland's Handgun Roster Board is a bureaucratic barricade designed to limit law-abiding citizens choice of firearms best suited for their needs, whether for self-defense, competition or sport. For the average person, this means you can't buy many of the most popular and trusted handguns on the market today. This isn't just an inconvenience; it's a direct assault on the core principles of the Second Amendment, effectively creating a tiered system of rights, where citizens in some states have fewer options than others simply because of where they live. These rosters aren't about safety; they are a political tool.

The impact of handgun rosters extends beyond just limiting choice. Gun shops in roster states are hit particularly hard. They are forced to carry a limited, often outdated, inventory. When a customer asks for a popular new model, they must turn them away, losing a sale and potentially a long-term customer. Consumers are equally frustrated and are often forced to buy pre-1985 used guns on the private market if they want a non-rostered model. Rosters create a bizarre secondary market where off-roster guns sell for two or three times their original price.

This is a classic case of government regulation creating the very problem it claims to solve: making firearms less accessible for law-abiding citizens while doing nothing to deter violent criminals who do not lawfully purchase firearms.

The Second Amendment guarantees law-abiding citizens the right to acquire, possess and carry arms that are in common use for lawful purposes by law-abiding citizens. In *District of Columbia v. Heller*, the Court held that arms "in common use" by law-abiding citizens may not be prohibited and has reaffirmed that rule repeatedly, explaining that the Second Amendment protects weapons that are commonly possessed for lawful purposes by law-abiding citizens and forbids governments from banning such arms.

The Maryland Handgun Roster Board does not need to be "reformed." It should be disbanded. It is unconstitutional.

However, since we must deal with this proposed legislation, there are important questions that need to be answered.

Several questions regarding the costs of HB 1339:

As of this writing, the Fiscal & Policy Note has not been published. What additional costs will burden the state's *current budget deficit*? For example,

- Page 7, Line 6, stipulates that all handguns that were approved to be on the handgun roster before October 1, 2026, must be reevaluated to determine whether they are still legal under state and federal law. These 5,000+ handguns will need to be tested by the Maryland State Police, Page 10, Line 19, incurring unbudgeted expense.
- In addition, on Page 7, Line 27, the Maryland State Police will contract with an [unnamed] independent, accredited testing laboratory to test these handguns, also incurring those expenses.
- Page 12, Line 4. The Secretary shall provide reasonable staffing, including an executive secretary and administrative support to the board – another great expense.

Regarding Page 14, Line 26, and the fee for testing and retesting – will the manufacturers be required to pay another fee to have their firearms retested?

Regarding the Handgun Roster Board membership:

Page 11, Line 19. Does the sponsor no longer want the expertise of the National Rifle Association (NRA) for the roster board? The NRA is, in fact, THE organization that advocates on behalf of handgun owners, promotes responsible firearm ownership, firearm safety, range instruction, and protects Second Amendment rights. This is the NRA's mission and has been since its founding in 1871.

According to Marylanders to Prevent Gun Violence, this bill will “improve transparency, documentation, and accountability of decision.” Therefore, all board meetings should be recorded, similar to the process at legislative committee hearings, and made available to the public.

This legislation will do nothing to prevent violent crime, and I respectfully request an UNFAVORABLE report on HB 1339.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Cathy S. Wright
North Beach, Anne Arundel County, MD