



CHRISTOPHER G. KOPACKI, PH.D.
Director, Government Relations - State Affairs
ckopacki@nssf.org | 202-893-2177 | nssf.org
400 N. Capitol Street NW, Suite 475, Washington, D.C. 20001

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The Honorable Sandy Bartlett
Chair, House Judiciary Committee
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: House Bill 741 – Firearms Dealers and Employees – Required Training and Exam

Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Chris Kopacki, and I serve as Director of Government Relations for the Mid-Atlantic region for the National Shooting Sports Foundation (“NSSF”), the trade association for the firearm, ammunition, and hunting industry. On behalf of NSSF and its members, I respectfully request an unfavorable report on House Bill 741.

NSSF strongly opposes HB 741 because it imposes duplicative and unnecessary regulatory requirements on federally licensed firearms dealers and their employees, creates new grounds for license denial unrelated to public safety violations, and adds administrative burdens that will disproportionately impact small businesses without a demonstrated benefit to crime prevention.

Federally licensed firearms dealers (“FFLs”) already operate under one of the most heavily regulated retail frameworks in the country. Federal law requires background checks, extensive recordkeeping, compliance inspections, reporting of multiple sales, theft reporting, and strict adherence to Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) regulations. Dealers are subject to federal oversight, civil penalties, license revocation, and criminal prosecution for violations. Maryland law already imposes additional state-specific requirements on dealers.

HB 741 would require every licensed dealer and every employee who “handles firearms” to complete annual training and pass a written examination approved by the Secretary of State Police. It further requires dealers to maintain certificates on site and subjects violations to civil penalties. While education and compliance are important, this mandate is redundant given existing federal compliance obligations and ATF training materials that already govern firearm transfers, recordkeeping, and detection of unlawful transactions.

The bill also creates a new automatic disapproval ground for a dealer’s license if the applicant has failed to complete or pass the required training and exam. This expands license denial authority beyond conduct related to unlawful activity and instead ties licensure to a recurring administrative

testing requirement. For small, family-owned firearm retailers with limited staff, the requirement that new employees complete training within 20 days and retake it annually creates operational burdens and potential exposure to penalties for technical noncompliance.

Notably, the training topics outlined in § 5-145.2—including straw purchases, trafficking, theft reporting, and safe handling—are already central to ATF compliance inspections and dealer education efforts. Dealers have a strong incentive to detect and prevent unlawful transactions, as their federal license and livelihood depend on strict compliance. HB 741 does not create new criminal penalties for traffickers or straw purchasers; rather, it imposes additional administrative layers on businesses that are already highly regulated.

The bill may also create unintended consequences by shifting focus from enforcement against bad actors to compliance audits of lawful retailers. Public safety is best served by targeting individuals who commit violent crimes, straw purchasers, and trafficking networks—not by adding duplicative regulatory requirements on dealers who are already operating under comprehensive federal oversight.

NSSF supports efforts to enhance collaboration between law enforcement and retailers and to promote best practices that prevent diversion of firearms into illegal markets. However, HB 741 mandates annual testing and certification in a manner that adds cost and regulatory complexity without evidence that such a requirement will reduce criminal misuse of firearms.

For these reasons, NSSF respectfully urges the Committee to issue an unfavorable report on House Bill 741.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Kopacki
Director of Government Relations, Mid-Atlantic
National Shooting Sports Foundation