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400 N. Capitol Street NW, Suite 475, Washington, D.C. 20001

February 25, 2026

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

Re: House Bill 1339 – Handgun Roster Reform

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 1339.

NSSF strongly opposes HB 1339 because it fundamentally restructures Maryland’s handgun roster process in a manner that introduces legal uncertainty, expands administrative discretion, imposes costly and duplicative testing requirements, and risks significantly limiting access to commonly owned, lawfully manufactured handguns without a demonstrated public safety benefit.

Under current law, the Handgun Roster Board evaluates firearms for inclusion on the roster based on enumerated statutory criteria. HB 1339 transfers primary decision-making authority to the Office of the Attorney General, requiring a formal legal review and written determination before any handgun may be placed on the roster. While legal review is an important function, concentrating approval authority in a single constitutional officer, combined with the authority to publish binding determinations and designate materials as confidential, risks transforming what has historically been a technical and administrative process into a subjective and potentially politicized one.

HB 1339 also imposes mandatory testing requirements under newly created § 5–403.1, including a 500-round live-fire test without cleaning, expanded drop and impact testing, environmental testing, and strict malfunction thresholds. Although safety testing is important, these requirements exceed commonly accepted industry standards and may operate as a de facto barrier to market entry. The bill also requires reevaluation and retesting of handguns already listed on the roster as of October 1, 2026. This retroactive application could result in the removal of widely owned, long-approved firearms from the roster, creating disruption for consumers, dealers, and manufacturers.

In addition, HB 1339 permits the Attorney General to toll review periods, extend deadlines for “good cause,” limit resubmissions, and adopt regulations to implement the process. When combined with the authority to determine whether a handgun is “lawful” under state and federal law and to publish legal analyses online, the bill grants sweeping discretion without clear, objective guardrails. Manufacturers and federally licensed dealers could face prolonged delays, unpredictable determinations, and significant compliance costs.

The bill further shifts the role of the Handgun Roster Board to that of a procedural oversight body, eliminating its substantive evaluation authority. By prohibiting the Board from making determinations regarding the lawfulness, safety, or functionality of handguns, HB 1339 effectively removes the balanced, multi-member review structure currently embedded in Maryland law and replaces it with a centralized approval regime.

HB 1339 may also have unintended consequences for law enforcement procurement and consumer choice. Many handguns currently listed on the roster are widely used for lawful self-defense and by law enforcement agencies nationwide. A system that delays approvals, increases costs, and retroactively reevaluates existing models risks reducing availability of common firearms without addressing criminal misuse.

Most importantly, HB 1339 does not target criminal behavior. Individuals who misuse firearms are already subject to significant criminal penalties under Maryland law. Imposing additional administrative barriers on lawful manufacturers and dealers does not meaningfully deter criminal conduct but instead burdens lawful commerce and lawful ownership.

For these reasons, NSSF respectfully urges the Committee to issue an unfavorable report on House Bill 1339.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

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