

Stoney Creek Fishing & Hunting Club
9090 Ft. Smallwood Rd.
Pasadena, MD 21122

February 13, 2020

SB 422 Firearms – Permit to Carry, Wear, or Transport – Required Courses
Testimony submitted by the Stoney Creek Fishing and Hunting Club
Opposed

The Stoney Creek Fishing and Hunting Club, which has some 300 members and has been in existence for over 70 years, **OPPOSES** SB 422. We oppose the Bill because its requirements would duplicate those of existing law, and it would be costly and burdensome for those citizens seeking a “wear and carry permit” to protect their lives.

The citizens of Maryland have the right under State law to protect themselves when their lives are in danger be they faced with domestic violence situations, are in high risk occupations or who must carry large sums on money or other valuables. This is the purpose of the “wear and carry permit” process. To obtain such a permit they must undergo thorough background checks, receive special training and be fully vetted by the Maryland State Police (MSP). Public Safety, Subtitle 5-306, mandates 16 hours of formal training for the initial issuance of a permit, and 8 hours of instruction for a permit renewal. Initially, a permit is valid for 2 years, and thereafter it is subject to renewal every three years. Both the 16 and 8 hour instructional blocks include two components, classroom instruction and a firearms qualification component. Classroom instruction addresses State firearm law; home firearm safety; and handgun mechanisms and operation. The firearms “qualification component” is to demonstrate “...the applicant’s proficiency and use of the firearm...” All instruction must be performed by an MSP certified instructor.

In addition to these strict requirements, SB 422 would add training on “situational awareness” and “competent handling of a firearm.” These courses would be required annually on top of the 16 hours or 8 hours, respectively, of instruction already mandated. Further, SB 422, does not specify the hours that are to be devoted to each of these subjects, but mandates they be held on “...separate days each calendar year...” (emphasis added). This would mean 16 hours plus two additional days of training for the initial application, two days of training one year later, and then a year later 8 hours of training plus again two days of training, and so on.

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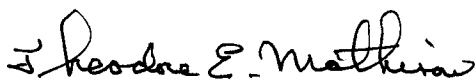
Not only are the requirements of SB 422 burdensome, but they duplicate the instructional requirements already included in the statutes. The subject "situation awareness", comes into play when an applicant demonstrates "proficiency and use of the firearm". One would expect such instruction to include, as a minimum, avoiding confrontations wherein possible and handling a firearm under situations that are life threatening. As to the second requirement of SB 422, i.e., the "competent handling of a firearm", this too is addressed under the requirement that an applicant demonstrate "proficiency and use of the firearm."

In addition to the burdensome requirements of SB 422, there is also a significant cost to each applicant. Recently, the cost of "wear and carry permit" training was checked with an Anne Arundel County Federal Firearms Licensee. The dealer charges for the initial 16 hours of training are \$300 for the classroom portion plus \$50 for the range qualification element. For the 8-hour block of renewal training, the charges are \$200 and \$50, respectively. In that SB 422 would require the additional training be conducted over two days, one could assume additional charges of between \$200 and \$300 depending upon the number of hours taught i.e., 8 or 4. Thus, an initial permit application could cost somewhere between \$550 and \$650, a permit renewal between \$450 and \$550. On top of that there would be an annual cost of \$200 to \$300 in the intervening years between renewals, These costs are a heavy burden for a single mom wrestling with domestic violence, a security guard and so forth.

In addition, the Anne Arundel County dealer conducts "wear and carry permit" training only on week days. Thus, individuals may have to take time off from work for both the the initial permit training and for each renewal. SB 422's requirements would necessitate additional days off from work.

Lastly, we note that Subtitle 5-306(b)(2) exempts from the 16 or 8 hours of instruction "...a member, retired member, or honorably discharged member of the armed forces of the United States or the National Guard..." Further, Subtitle 5-306(b)(4) exempts an applicant who "...has completed a firearms training course approved by the Secretary..." However, these exemptions are omitted from SB 422. This appears punitive as well as discriminatory.

In view of the many shortcomings of SB 422 and its burdensome impact, we strongly recommend it receive an unfavorable report.



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