



State of Maryland
Department of State Police
Government Affairs Section
Annapolis Office (410) 260-6100

POSITION ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION

DATE: March 31, 2021

BILL NUMBER: Senate Bill 15 **POSITION:** Letter of Information

BILL TITLE: Firearms – Handgun Permit – Notice of Expiration and
Renewal Instructions

REVIEW AND ANALYSIS:

This legislation seeks to require the Secretary of the Department of State Police to provide notice to a handgun permit holder 60 days prior to the expiration of their handgun permit. The notice shall include the impending expiration and instructions on how to renew through the Licensing Portal.

The Licensing Division, as part of its ongoing modernization, launched an electronic, web-based application program on October 1, 2019. The new system is required to be used for all new applications and renewal of handgun permits. Any applicant who used the on-line system after October 1, 2019, will be notified via email when their renewal application is due. After October 1, 2022 every current permit holder will be in the Portal and will be notified of their expiration date via email.

Senate Bill 15 will negatively impact the Department's Licensing Division because there are a number of permit holders today who submitted their applications on paper prior to the 2019 electronic conversion. The Department does not know which permit holders have since renewed using the portal, so to comply with this legislation, our personnel will have to hand search the thousands of paper files to identify those permit holders that have renewed using the portal and those who have yet to renew. Once that list is developed, the expiration dates, email or mailing addresses will have to be collected so that the required notice can be sent. There are approximately 23,000 active handgun permits issued in Maryland that would be affected by this legislation. There is no searchable database that contains the information for applications submitted prior to October 1, 2019.

As this legislation is unfunded and is effective July 1, 2021, the Department will have to redirect personnel from the Licensing Division, who are currently performing background checks on firearms transfers, to research the paper records to comply with this new law. This action jeopardizes thorough investigations and impacts the mandated time frame for the transfer approval or denial.

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Unfortunately, the volume of firearm sales has doubled and the Licensing Division personnel are burning approximately \$10,000 a day in overtime to meet the current 7-day background check requirements on firearms transfers.

The Licensing Division is currently experiencing a high volume of handgun purchase requests. These purchase or transfer requests require a background investigation to be completed in seven days. (Purchase applications have doubled from 2019 to 2020) Additionally, handgun permit applications have doubled from 2019 to 2020.