



**BILL NO:** House Bill 676  
**TITLE:** Handgun Permits – Qualifications – High-Risk Occupations  
**COMMITTEE:** Judiciary  
**HEARING DATE:** February 16, 2022  
**POSITION:** **OPPOSE**

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The Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence (MNADV) is the state domestic violence coalition that brings together victim service providers, allied professionals, and concerned individuals for the common purpose of reducing intimate partner and family violence and its harmful effects on our citizens. **MNADV urges the House Judiciary Committee to issue an unfavorable report on HB 676.**

Higher rates of firearm ownership correlate to a higher rate of domestic violence homicide according to a 2019 study.<sup>1</sup> There is a 65% higher incidence rate of domestic firearm homicide in the states with the highest firearm ownership compared to states with lower ownership rates.<sup>2</sup> Since women are the most common victims of domestic violence homicide, they are most at risk with increased gun ownership.<sup>3</sup> Black women are disproportionately the victims of domestic violence homicide with a firearm with an estimated 51.3% of Black adult female homicides found to be related to intimate partner violence.<sup>4</sup> The risk of homicide for women increases by 500% with the presence of a gun in the home.<sup>5</sup>

The Supreme Court stated in *District of Columbia v. Heller* that “[l]ike most rights, the right secured by the *Second Amendment* is not unlimited.”<sup>6</sup> Current Maryland law sets reasonable standards to obtain a permit to wear, carry, or transport a handgun. House Bill 676 seeks to vastly expand the current standards regarding whom may be granted a permit to carry, wear, or transport a handgun. Pursuant to Md. PUBLIC SAFETY Code Ann. § 5-306(a)(6)(ii), a person must have a “good and substantial reason to wear, carry, or transport a handgun, such as a finding that the permit is necessary as a reasonable precaution against apprehended danger.” House Bill 676 would alter the “good and substantial reason”

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<sup>1</sup> Kivisto, A.J., Magee, L.A., Phalen, P.L., Ray, B.R. (2019). Firearm ownership and domestic versus nondomestic homicide in the U.S. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, Abstract: [https://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797\(19\)30197-7/fulltext#articleInformation](https://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797(19)30197-7/fulltext#articleInformation)

<sup>2</sup> Merovsh, Sarah. “Gun Ownership Rates Tied to Domestic Homicides, but Not Other Killings, Study Finds,” *NY Times*, (July 22, 2019) <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/22/us/gun-ownership-violence-statistics.html>

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

<sup>4</sup> Petrosky, E., Blair, J.M., Betz, C.J., Fowler, K.A., Jack, S.P.D., & Lyons, B.H. (2017). Racial and ethnic differences in homicides of adult women and the role of intimate partner violence - United States, 2003-2014. *MMWR. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 66(28), 741-746. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/66/wr/pdfs/mm6628a1.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> The National Domestic Violence Hotline, Retrieved 1/29/21, <https://www.thehotline.org/resources/safety-planning-around-guns-and-firearms/>

<sup>6</sup> *District of Columbia v. Heller*, 554 U.S. 570, 626 (2008).

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standard to allow persons employed in a list of 10 different professions who want a permit to carry, wear or transport a handgun to obtain one.

According to the 2021 Fiscal Note for this identical bill which was HB 538 it was anticipated that there would be an additional 30,000 applications and approximately 90,000 people eligible based solely on occupation. Maryland's wear, carry, or transport handgun law is well-balanced and allows for those that can demonstrate a good and substantial reason to obtain a permit. There is no basis to broadly expand this statute for these professions. Any of these individuals can obtain a wear, carry, or transport handgun permit with the requisite good and substantial reason. With the knowledge that the presence of guns increases the risk of domestic violence homicide MNADV is deeply concerned about the potential impact of HB 676 for victims of domestic violence.

For the above stated reasons, the **Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence urges an unfavorable report on HB 676.**