

HB0481 Criminal Law – Wearing, Carrying, or Transporting a Handgun – Penalty

Stance: Unfavorable

Testimony: My name is Adiena Britt and I reside within the 45th Legislative district. I am testifying against this proposal to increase the penalty for handgun violations from three to five years. This Bill seems to be part of a short-sighted campaign put forth by some State's Attorneys in the state. The same State's Attorneys that fail to prosecute people equally in cases of police brutality.

This Bill will only manage to drag us all backwards into "mandatory minimums" that we fought against people like Larry Hogan and Bob Ehrlich about. Mass incarceration for longer stints of time is not going to solve the issues within our society. Good Social Programs and Interventions are the answer. Increasing the sentencing on some of these violations is NOT a deterrent. The threat of increasing mass incarceration is NOT a deterrent. Your time would be better served to attempt to resolve the issues that have chronically plagued our society and impacts the poor in ways that are oppressive enough to lead to desperation.

Instead of attempting to pad the pockets of the prison industrial complex, perhaps fund social programs in our most needy neighborhoods. Instead of closing schools and recreation centers, instead of allowing food deserts, instead of allowing unbalanced unemployment; perhaps fund these things and the crime within the state would go down.

I urge you all to stop feeding into the fallacy that locking people up, and for longer periods of time is the answer to what ails us. It isn't the answer, it's a symptom.

Thank you.