

OPPOSE HB 481 "Criminal Law – Wearing, Carrying, or Transporting a Handgun – Penalty"

I oppose HB481 for the simple reason that it not only denies our right to carry a handgun, but also criminalizes us for exercising that right. This bill seeks to extinguish a civil right. I am astounded that it is even under consideration since it is so blatantly in opposition to a fundamental right. Its drafters might be forgiven if the case law on this issue were archaic or ambiguous, but it could not be more fresh, nor more authoritative and clear. The Supreme Court in *BRUEN* in 2022 definitively affirmed that individuals enjoy the right to carry a handgun in public - outside the home.

This bill pretends the issue of firearms carry by lawful citizens is not yet settled law. It rejects the *BRUEN* Supreme Court decision and seeks to impose penalties on citizens who choose to exercise the civil right to protect oneself that the Court's decision affirmed. The Court found that a general prohibition of carry in public, envisioned in this bill, is unconstitutional. This bill's timing appears retaliatory, as it is no coincidence that it comes in the opening days of the General Assembly - as soon as possible after the *BRUEN* case. This bill suppresses a fundamental right. It violates established law. If passed, it WILL be overthrown by the courts, in time - at the human cost of depriving Marylanders of their most basic rights and the monetary costs incurred by the State attempting to defend this unconscionable bill. I urge your opposition to the HB481.