



President
Mark W. Pennak

January 30, 2018

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF MARK W. PENNAK, PRESIDENT,
MARYLAND SHALL ISSUE, IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 196**

I am the President of Maryland Shall Issue (“MSI”). Maryland Shall Issue is an all-volunteer, non-partisan organization dedicated to the preservation and advancement of gun owners’ rights in Maryland. It seeks to educate the community about the right of self-protection, the safe handling of firearms, and the responsibility that goes with carrying a firearm in public. I am also an attorney and an active member of the Bar of the District of Columbia. I recently retired from the United States Department of Justice, where I practiced law for 33 years in the Courts of Appeals of the United States and in the Supreme Court of the United States. I am an expert in Maryland Firearms Law and the law of self-defense. I am also a Maryland State Police certified handgun instructor for the Maryland Wear and Carry Permit and the Maryland Handgun Qualification License (“HQL”) and a certified NRA instructor in rifle, pistol and personal protection in the home and personal protection outside the home and a range safety officer. I appear today as President of MSI in support of Senate Bill 196.

MD Code, Public Safety, § 5-306(d) currently provides that the Secretary of the State Police “may” issue a Handgun Qualification License to a person who meets the requirements for a handgun wear and carry permit and does not yet have such License. The bill simply changes “may” to “shall,” so as to make clear that the HQL be issued to carry permit holders without further ado. The training requirements for the wear and carry permit set forth in Section 5-306 (16 hours and a proficiency live fire test) far exceed those for the HQL, as set for in MD Code, Public Safety, § 5-117.1 (four of classroom training). Similarly, the background check process conducted by the State Police for a carry permit is rigorous and the vetting much more extensive than for the HQL. There simply no rational basis for requiring a person who qualifies for a carry permit to take the HQL training or make a separate application for the HQL under Section 5-117.1.

Sincerely,

Mark W. Pennak
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