

# SENATE BILL 378

E1  
SB 564/23 – JPR

4lr1121

---

By: **Senators West, Carozza, Watson, Klausmeier, and James**  
Introduced and read first time: January 17, 2024  
Assigned to: Judicial Proceedings

---

## A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Criminal Law – Theft of a Handgun**

3 FOR the purpose of establishing the felony of theft of a handgun; and generally relating to  
4 theft of a handgun.

5 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,  
6 Article – Criminal Law  
7 Section 7–104  
8 Annotated Code of Maryland  
9 (2021 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

10 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,  
11 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

12 **Article – Criminal Law**

13 7–104.

14 (a) A person may not willfully or knowingly obtain or exert unauthorized control  
15 over property, if the person:

16 (1) intends to deprive the owner of the property;

17 (2) willfully or knowingly uses, conceals, or abandons the property in a  
18 manner that deprives the owner of the property; or

19 (3) uses, conceals, or abandons the property knowing the use, concealment,  
20 or abandonment probably will deprive the owner of the property.

21 (b) A person may not obtain control over property by willfully or knowingly using  
22 deception, if the person:

---

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.  
[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 (1) intends to deprive the owner of the property;

2 (2) willfully or knowingly uses, conceals, or abandons the property in a  
3 manner that deprives the owner of the property; or

4 (3) uses, conceals, or abandons the property knowing the use, concealment,  
5 or abandonment probably will deprive the owner of the property.

6 (c) (1) A person may not possess stolen personal property knowing that it has  
7 been stolen, or believing that it probably has been stolen, if the person:

8 (i) intends to deprive the owner of the property;

9 (ii) willfully or knowingly uses, conceals, or abandons the property  
10 in a manner that deprives the owner of the property; or

11 (iii) uses, conceals, or abandons the property knowing that the use,  
12 concealment, or abandonment probably will deprive the owner of the property.

13 (2) In the case of a person in the business of buying or selling goods, the  
14 knowledge required under this subsection may be inferred if:

15 (i) the person possesses or exerts control over property stolen from  
16 more than one person on separate occasions;

17 (ii) during the year preceding the criminal possession charged, the  
18 person has acquired stolen property in a separate transaction; or

19 (iii) being in the business of buying or selling property of the sort  
20 possessed, the person acquired it for a consideration that the person knew was far below a  
21 reasonable value.

22 (3) In a prosecution for theft by possession of stolen property under this  
23 subsection, it is not a defense that:

24 (i) the person who stole the property has not been convicted,  
25 apprehended, or identified;

26 (ii) the defendant stole or participated in the stealing of the property;

27 (iii) the property was provided by law enforcement as part of an  
28 investigation, if the property was described to the defendant as being obtained through the  
29 commission of theft; or

30 (iv) the stealing of the property did not occur in the State.

1 (4) Unless the person who criminally possesses stolen property  
2 participated in the stealing, the person who criminally possesses stolen property and a  
3 person who has stolen the property are not accomplices in theft for the purpose of any rule  
4 of evidence requiring corroboration of the testimony of an accomplice.

5 (d) A person may not obtain control over property knowing that the property was  
6 lost, mislaid, or was delivered under a mistake as to the identity of the recipient or nature  
7 or amount of the property, if the person:

8 (1) knows or learns the identity of the owner or knows, is aware of, or  
9 learns of a reasonable method of identifying the owner;

10 (2) fails to take reasonable measures to restore the property to the owner;  
11 and

12 (3) intends to deprive the owner permanently of the use or benefit of the  
13 property when the person obtains the property or at a later time.

14 (e) A person may not obtain the services of another that are available only for  
15 compensation:

16 (1) by deception; or

17 (2) with knowledge that the services are provided without the consent of  
18 the person providing them.

19 (f) Under this section, an offender's intention or knowledge that a promise would  
20 not be performed may not be established by or inferred solely from the fact that the promise  
21 was not performed.

22 (g) (1) **THIS SUBSECTION DOES NOT APPLY TO THEFT OF A HANDGUN, AS**  
23 **DEFINED IN § 5-101 OF THE PUBLIC SAFETY ARTICLE.**

24 (2) A person convicted of theft of property or services with a value of:

25 (i) at least \$1,500 but less than \$25,000 is guilty of a felony and:

26 1. is subject to imprisonment not exceeding 5 years or a fine  
27 not exceeding \$10,000 or both; and

28 2. shall restore the property taken to the owner or pay the  
29 owner the value of the property or services;

30 (ii) at least \$25,000 but less than \$100,000 is guilty of a felony and:

31 1. is subject to imprisonment not exceeding 10 years or a fine  
32 not exceeding \$15,000 or both; and



1            **[(5)] (6)**        The court may not impose the penalties under paragraph **[(4)]**  
2 **(5)** of this subsection unless the State's Attorney serves notice on the defendant or the  
3 defendant's counsel before the acceptance of a plea of guilty or nolo contendere or at least  
4 15 days before trial that:

5            (i)        the State will seek the penalties under paragraph **[(4)] (5)** of this  
6 subsection; and

7            (ii)        lists the alleged prior convictions.

8            **(H) (1) A PERSON CONVICTED OF THEFT OF A HANDGUN, AS DEFINED IN**  
9 **§ 5-101 OF THE PUBLIC SAFETY ARTICLE, IS GUILTY OF A FELONY AND IS SUBJECT**  
10 **TO:**

11            **(I) FOR A FIRST CONVICTION, IMPRISONMENT NOT EXCEEDING**  
12 **5 YEARS OR A FINE NOT EXCEEDING \$1,000 OR BOTH; AND**

13            **(II) FOR A SECOND OR SUBSEQUENT CONVICTION,**  
14 **IMPRISONMENT NOT EXCEEDING 10 YEARS OR A FINE NOT EXCEEDING \$2,500 OR**  
15 **BOTH.**

16            **(2) A SENTENCE IMPOSED UNDER PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS**  
17 **SUBSECTION SHALL BE SEPARATE FROM AND CONSECUTIVE TO A SENTENCE FOR**  
18 **ANY OTHER OFFENSE.**

19            **[(h)] (I) (1)** If a person is convicted of a violation under this section for failure  
20 to pay for motor fuel after the motor fuel was dispensed into a vehicle, the court shall:

21            (i)        notify the person that the person's driver's license may be  
22 suspended under § 16-206.1 of the Transportation Article; and

23            (ii)        notify the Motor Vehicle Administration of the violation.

24            (2)        The Chief Judge of the District Court and the Administrative Office of  
25 the Courts, in conjunction with the Motor Vehicle Administration, shall establish uniform  
26 procedures for reporting a violation under this subsection.

27            **[(i)] (J)**        An action or prosecution for a violation of subsection **[(g)](2) or (3)**  
28 **(G)(3) OR (4)** of this section shall be commenced within 2 years after the commission of  
29 the crime.

30            **[(j)] (K)**        A person who violates this section by use of an interactive computer  
31 service may be prosecuted, indicted, tried, and convicted in any county in which the victim  
32 resides or the electronic communication originated or terminated.

1           SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect  
2   October 1, 2024.