



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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January 24, 2018

Testimony In Support of LD 1761

"An Act Regarding the Prohibition on the Possession of a Firearm on School Property"

Senator Langley, Representative Kornfield, and members of the Joint Standing Committee of Education and Cultural Affairs, my name is Representative Patrick Corey and I serve the people of Windham. I'm here to speak in favor of LD 1761, An Act Regarding the Prohibition on the Possession of a Firearm on School Property.

I'll admit, this bill's title could be a heck of a lot more specific. When Representative Martin approached me about cosponsoring this bill on Bill Signing Day, you bet I had questions and read it several times, especially knowing that a very similar bill was presented in this committee last year.

LD 1761's language is extremely limited in scope and very specific. This bill would allow a person in possession of a firearm to drop off or pick up a student so long as that person remains in the vehicle. Further, the firearm is unloaded and stored in a locked container or locked firearms rack. Moreover, this is done in accordance with Vice President Biden's Gun-Free School Zones Act of 1990. That federal law is one that most would agree is well-intentioned.

I can assure this committee that an unloaded firearm in a locked container or rack is incapable of discharging. Further, a firearm in a person's direct control is safer than one that is left unsupervised or unattended. This bill's very specific language would leave every other school zone provision intact and any actions outside of this bill's federally legal allowances would remain illegal.

I sit on the Criminal Justice and Safety Committee where almost every day I'm faced with two questions. One, what does a criminal law that is being proposed or eliminated actually accomplish? Two, does a law being proposed or eliminated have the effect of putting an otherwise law abiding citizen into the criminal justice system? Wrestling with these questions is now in this committee's hands and I'm positive that you will receive testimony in support and opposition of this measure to guide you in that decision.

Responsible, law-abiding firearms ownership is a right that many Mainers hold dear and practice on a daily basis. I strongly believe that the laws we have should be compatible with our citizens' rights and easy to follow. I tend to believe this is exactly why these exemptions were included in the Gun-Free School Zones Act of 1990.

Thank you for your consideration.

District 25 Windham (part)