

**MAINE
PRINCIPALS'
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*MPA is an Equal
Opportunity Organization*

TO: Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs
FROM: MPA Legislative Committee
**SUBJECT: in Opposition of LD 1761: An Act Regarding the
Prohibition on the Possession of a Firearm on School
Property.**
DATE: January 24, 2018

Senator Langley, Representative Kornfield, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs. My name is Dick Durost and I am the Executive Director of the Maine Principals' Association, representing more than 800 Prek-12 principals and assistant principals of public and private schools throughout Maine.

The MPA Legislative Committee opposes LD 1761. The safety of students and staff in Maine schools is of the highest priority among members of the MPA. Rarely a week goes by without a case of school violence somewhere in the United States involving firearms. Taking every possible step to keep firearms off school property should be of utmost concern to us all.

Keeping firearms off school property is not a gun rights issue – rather it is one of safety and of sending a consistent message about its importance. Well-intended citizens can be forgetful and might leave firearms loaded and unlocked. To suggest that a citizen is not going to leave the unlocked vehicle to chase after Billy or Susie with a forgotten bookbag or lunch money is an unreasonable assumption. Let's provide the safest of all environments and continue the prohibition of firearms on school property as required in present statute. Let's not add to the responsibilities of administrators and others as to checking whether firearms are loaded or unloaded, and locked or unlocked. Let's keep student and staff safety first!

The MPA strongly urges the Committee to vote unanimously **Ought Not to Pass on LD 1761.**