



January 24, 2018

Our Mission

Maine Gun Safety Coalition promotes responsible gun ownership in order to create a safer Maine.

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Senator Langley, Representative Kornfield, distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, my name is Nick Wilson and I am the Executive Director of the Maine Gun Safety Coalition. I appreciate the opportunity to testify in opposition of LD 1370. 1761

Yesterday morning, a 15-year-old shot and killed two classmates, and injured another 18 innocent children. The day before, there were school shootings in Texas and Louisiana. In the first three weeks of 2018, Maine has suffered at least four shooting deaths, a Portland man fatally shot his domestic partner, a Maine man shot and killed a 79-year-old man, and a Farmington man killed his wife before shooting himself.

Rather than address ways we can make our schools and communities safer, we are spending valuable committee time and taxpayer money to hear a guns in schools parking lot submitted by the out-of-state gun lobby for the second year in a row. This bill is part of a nation-wide effort by the National Rifle Association to eliminate prohibitions on guns in schools.

While the gun lobby is trying to get another checkmark on its national report card, here in Maine, our organization has been overwhelmed with hundreds of calls and emails from angry and scared parents, teachers, and administrators.

Every day, we hear from parents and teachers who are concerned that more guns in schools, even their parking lots, will lead to more unintentional shootings and verbal arguments becoming fatal. It will also put law enforcement at risk because if their worst nightmare happens and there is an active shooter at a school, they will not be able to tell who is the good guy with the gun versus the bad guy with the gun. We will also see more suicides, which account for 86% of gun deaths. For example, in 2004, a man fatally shot himself in a Benton Elementary School parking lot. Imagine the trauma inflicted on a young child seeing a violent suicide or parking lot argument turned into a shoot-out.

I want to thank this committee for opposing this same bill last year with bi-partisan cooperation. I urge you to speak up on behalf of all the educators and children who have enough challenges facing them every day without the fear of more guns in schools. Please keep our children safe and defeat this bill unanimously.