



Testimony in Support of LD 405 An Act to Prevent False Reporting Leading to Evacuation,
Shutdown or Lockdown

Good morning, Senator Beebe-Center, Rep. Salisbury, and members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee.

My name is Janice Vance and I live in Kennebunk. I am a member of the Maine Gun Safety Coalition, which raises awareness about the effects of gun violence. More importantly, I have a twenty year old college student who wants to be an elementary school teacher.

During the November 2022 Maine “swatting” incident, which targeted ten schools, my kid’s campus got wind of it, and for a while some students were terrified that a school shooter armed with assault rifles was at the USM campus too. My kid texted and then called me, and I almost jumped in the car and drove up to the campus, even if just to hug her and reassure her. She was terrified. Exactly the effect the perpetrator was going for.

Unless you have a teenager, I don’t think most people realize the unprecedented pressure and fear kids today are dealing with in their daily lives. They know that school shootings are on the increase, and they fear their school could be next. As a result, the number of kids with anxiety disorders has skyrocketed. Any medical doctor can tell you about the effects of long-term stress on the body, and I’m not a doctor, but what we are doing to our kids doesn’t bode well for their future health.

I am grateful to Senator Carney for introducing this bill. There needs to be consequences for terrorism. There also needs to be more awareness of the importance of keeping firearms locked and out of the reach of kids. Most school shooters got the weapons at home or from a home where they knew they were unsecured. Our kids know this, by the way, which adds to their stress, and helps swatters whip the fear into a froth.

My kid has already been out in elementary school classrooms working with students, and will start student teaching in the fall. She’s asked me, “What if it happens while I’m at a school?” Her fellow teachers-in-training talk about it. Some of her friends who once wanted to teach have decided on other careers because they don’t feel safe in schools.

I look forward to passage of LD 405, and to the passage of other common sense legislation that will help keep my kid – and ALL kids - safe and healthy.

Janice Vance
Kennebunk
LD 405

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