

Maura Pillsbury
Freeport
LD 477

March 27, 2023

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee,

My name is Maura Pillsbury. I am a resident of Freeport, a mom to two young children, and a school board member. I am submitting this testimony on my own behalf in support of LD 477, a Resolve Directing the Department of Education, Maine School Safety Center to Convene a Stakeholder Group to Develop Best Practices for Lockdown Drills and Allowing Parents to Opt Out of Lockdown Drills for Their Children. I believe safety drills and preparedness at school are important, and their use should be carefully weighed against potential harm they may cause. Recently my 4th grader came home, and excitedly told me, "Mom, guess what I get to do in high school?" His enthusiasm was clear, and as a parent my heart swelled with happiness that he wanted to share it with me. Until he said: "Learn how to throw staplers at intruders." My heart sank. I was stunned. Several weeks before, the school board had made the decision to adopt ALICE in our schools, with the support and encouragement of the local police department. I opposed this decision. We did not explore or even consider other training options. Further, parents in our school district were told they could not opt their children out of these drills. ALICE was not developed for school children. It is a for profit company that provides training in a variety of settings, including workplaces. It teaches children at the high school and middle school level to throw things to distract intruders and barricade their classrooms. Students talk, and so the conversation trickled down into the elementary school, where my child learned about it. He is aware of school shootings. He knows that they happen. I would like him to feel safe at school, and I would like his school to be prepared should the worst happen. I do not want him practicing how to defend his classroom against an attacker. I want our school district to safety guidance that is evidence based and specifically designed for school children. We have failed as a society when we expect our children to defend their schools before we adequately regulate guns. I urge you to support this bill. Thank you.