



Janet T. Mills
Governor

Michael J. Sauschuck
Commissioner

STATE OF MAINE
Department of Public Safety
MAINE STATE POLICE

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William Ross
Colonel

LTC. Brian P. Scott
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Testimony of Lieutenant Tyler Stevenson
Maine State Police

In Opposition of (1557)

An Act to Increase and Enhance School Safety by Allowing Individuals with Concealed Carry Permits to Possess Handguns on School Property.

Sponsored by Representative Paul
Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Salisbury, and honorable members of the Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety: My name is Lieutenant Tyler Stevenson and I have provided written testimony on behalf of the Maine State Police and the Maine Department of Public Safety to testify in opposition of LD 1557, "An Act to Increase and Enhance School Safety by Allowing Individuals with Concealed Carry Permits to Possess Handguns on School Property."

Maine Department of Public Safety and Maine State Police is opposed to LD 1557 due to possible safety concerns. As an officer, responding to a report of an active shooter or armed person at a school is one of the most stressful, chaotic, and emotional experiences that a police officer will ever encounter. Although highly trained, a police officer in this situation is likely to experience heightened levels of adrenaline and cortisol coursing through their body as it reacts to the stress they are facing. The officer may also experience "tunnel vision" and "auditory exclusion" as they enter the school in search of a shooter or armed subject and will rely on their training to stop the active threat. Information regarding the suspect(s) identity will likely be limited, meaning the police officer will have to react to what they are observing in real time. As a result, you can understand that if a police officer in this situation encounters a concerned citizen that is also armed with a handgun and not identified in anyway as a police officer, it could potentially result in a tragedy and, at minimum, slow the officer's response.

Another potential safety concern is the reality that a handgun that is concealed is not always truly hidden. Handguns come in different sizes, shapes, and colors and so do the holsters and packs that contain them. Additionally, some handguns are more suitable than others for concealed carry purposes. There are times when it becomes obvious that someone is carrying a handgun, namely when a handgun is carried under a tight shirt or becomes inadvertently exposed when bending over, such as to pick up a backpack or get a drink from a water fountain. If a teacher or student observes an unknown person carrying a handgun in a school, it could result in panic, school lockdowns, and calls to the police that are not needed.

++ INTEGRITY ++ ++ FAIRNESS ++ ++ COMPASSION ++ ++ EXCELLENCE ++

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On behalf of the State Police and the Department of Public Safety, we appreciate your careful consideration of these issues. Thank you for your time and we would be happy to work with the sponsor and the committee at the work session.

Respectfully,

Lieutenant Tyler Stevenson