

Ann Sawchuck
Cumberland
LD 1557

STRONGLY OPPOSE LD 1557

Chairpersons Rafferty and Brennan, and members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee, thank you for reading my testimony strongly OPPOSING LD 1557, An Act to Increase and Enhance School Safety by Allowing Individuals with Concealed Carry Permits to Possess Handguns on School Property.

My name is Ann Sawchuck and I am a resident of Cumberland, Maine. I am the daughter of a public school teacher and for 10 years, following my retirement from business, I was a volunteer academic coach for ESL students in the Portland Public Schools. I am also a grandmother with a grandchild yet to enter school in Maine.

Maine has been fortunate to escape a mass shooting in our schools, maybe because our schools are now firearm free zones (20 MRSA 6552, Firearms), like Maine's courts and the Statehouse. LD 1557 will do nothing to increase school safety and much to harm it by intentionally bringing dangerous weapons into schools. Will you open up the courts and the Statehouse to danger in the same way? It is likewise unthinkable to invite guns into our schools.

Maine's voluntary concealed firearm permit law (25 MRSA 2003) is a very low-bar permit law which will issue permits to persons who are 18 years old with minimal weapons training. In other words, many high school seniors could probably get a permit. LD 1557 happily extends its in-school concealed carry permission to 18 year olds with a permit.

Our children have enough stress to deal with already. Do you want to introduce even more emotional turmoil? How will your young child feel if they see someone with a "concealed" weapon in their school? How about your high school student who knows that a teen acquaintance carries a concealed weapon and there is nothing to be done about it? Will you arm your teen so they will feel safer? Do you want to worry about which minimally trained volunteer is roaming the halls of your child's school with a concealed weapon? Maybe leaving it somewhere where a child can find it? These thoughts are terrifying.

My heart hurts for all the families who have lost cherished children to the relentless carnage of our gun culture. Please do not invite guns into Maine's schools. This is not a solution.

LD 1557 is a bad idea. Please OPPOSE it.