

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO

L.D. 52—AN ACT TO ALLOW CERTAIN SCHOOL EMPLOYEES TO CARRY FIREARMS ON SCHOOL PROPERTY

L.D. 518—AN ACT TO ALLOW ARMED SECURITY IN SCHOOLS

L.D. 1557—AN ACT TO INCREASE AND ENHANCE SCHOOL SAFETY BY ALLOWING INDIVIDUALS WITH CONCEALED CARRY PERMITS TO POSSESS HANDGUNS ON SCHOOL PROPERTY

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan and members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee. I am Victoria Wallack, director of communications and government relations for Maine School Management Association, testifying on behalf of the legislative committees of the Maine School Boards Association and Maine School Superintendents Association in opposition to L.D. 52, L.D. 518, and L.D. 1557.

These three bills do similar things with varying requirements and restrictions. We are opposed to all three because we do not want guns on school property.

L.D. 52 allows school employees to possess or discharge a gun within 500 feet of school property to enhance the safety and security of the school, if they've done training at the Criminal Justice Academy and have been authorized by the School Board to possess or discharge a firearm.

L.D. 518 allows a School Board to engage by contract a school resource officer, private contractor or volunteer with applicable background and experience, which are not defined, to carry.

L.D. 1557 allows a person with a permit to carry concealed handguns, to possess a firearm on school grounds.

We would like things to be as clear and straightforward as possible when it comes to guns on school grounds by keeping current statute as it is. It reads.

Title 20-A §6552

Prohibition. A person may not possess a firearm on public school property or the property of an approved private school or discharge a firearm within 500 feet of public school property or the property of an approved private school.

Exemptions are made for those using a school-operated gun range if the range and gun program are authorized by School Board policy.

We urge you to defeat these bills because when the lines get blurred on whether guns are or are not allowed on school property, that has the potential of putting our students and staff at risk.