

Jennifer DeCristoforo
Yarmouth
LD 1557

Dear COECA,

I am writing to implore you to reject any bills that come in front of you to add guns and armed employees to any school setting.

Whether it is presented as security, self-defense, or active shooter response, it is not going to make a difference in school safety. If anything, it will make schools less safe. More guns mean more violence and more deaths. Full stop.

I'm sure there is a lot of lip service on how school employees can be trained and loaded, lethal weapons can be safely stored in schools in order to sell this idea. Really??? This state does a dismal job of any level of safety, security and legal compliance for the thousands of guns in citizens' hands. Why would this be different?

Also, there will be many educators and administrators that immediately leave the profession if legislation passes. So along with our schools turning into dangerous war zones, we will be degrading and diminishing an already overworked, under-appreciated segment of our essential work force and future which will add even more risk and suffering to our students.

I only hope you see these actions and bills for what they are. Opportunistic politicians that care a lot about their own careers and little about our children and educators.

We can make schools safer. We can employ trained, skilled police officers and school resource officers where necessary. We can enhance the locked doors and security layers of our physical school sites. We can improve risk management communication to identify potential tragedies and threatening individuals on social media. And we can finally move in the direction of increased gun safety, background checks, red flag laws, outlawing assault weapons and reducing the amount of guns in our communities (which will also aid in reducing drug crime and weapon trafficking since Maine is a major supplier to the entire country and Canada).

Please don't harm our children. Please respect our educators. Everyone wants a safer environment. Please don't be misled by the gaslighting of extremists. I honestly don't know how they can look at their children and grandchildren without shame.

Thank you for reviewing my comments.

Jennifer DeCristoforo
Yarmouth