

Paula Smith  
Cumberland  
LD 551

Testimony of Paula Smith  
before the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee,  
in OPPOSITION to LD 551 An Act to Strengthen Maine Citizens' Second  
Amendment Rights by Allowing the Discharge of Firearms on Private Property That  
Is Within 500 Feet of School Property in Certain Circumstances,  
And

in SUPPORT of LD 1340 - An Act to Prohibit the Sale or Possession of Rapid-fire  
Modification Devices

And

in OPPOSITION to LD 1560 - An Act to Remove the Duty of an Individual  
Exercising Self-defense to Safely Retreat or Abstain from Performing Certain Acts  
upon Demand

Distinguished members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee, my  
name is Paula Smith and I am a resident of Cumberland. WE MUST DO  
SOMETHING TO STOP THE GUN VIOLENCE!

LD 551

- Research shows that when more people are carrying firearms in public, violent crime rates rise. We all want to keep our families safe, so firearms should not be allowed within 500 feet of school property where children are playing and learning.
- An overwhelming majority of law enforcement officers agree that armed citizens in or near places like schools would make their jobs harder.
- Federal and state laws ensuring that schools are gun-free zones have helped make K–12 schools even safer, significantly reducing gun violence in these places. School-associated student homicide rates decreased after the federal laws restricting guns within 1,000 feet of schools were adopted in the early 1990s.

LD 1340:

- Guns equipped with bump stocks were used in the largest and deadliest mass shooting in modern American history in 2017 in Las Vegas, in which 60 people were shot and killed and hundreds more were wounded.
- These weapon accessories serve no other purpose than to increase the rate of fire to maximize the number of dead and wounded.
- Hunters do not need bump stocks to hunt.
- Many responsible gun owners report that they do not want to own or use bump stocks.

LD 1560:

- Evidence does not support the claim that ‘stand your ground’ laws deter criminal activity and violence. In fact, several studies examining homicide and violent crime rates consistently show that the passage of stand your ground laws increase homicides and gun injuries.
- Stand your ground laws create a dangerous “shoot first” culture of violence and vigilantism. They have repeatedly allowed people to shoot and kill others even when they could have easily and safely walked away.
- One study of cases in which stand your ground was used as a defense in Florida from 2005 through 2012 found that in 79% of the cases where such claims succeeded, the defendant could have retreated to avoid the confrontation, and in 68% of successful claims, the person killed was unarmed.
- Stand your ground laws may also embolden individuals, often with a history of violence, to escalate conflicts and kill.

Please publish more data on what percentage of people want to take action to make

tougher laws for gun violence prevention vs. the percentage of people who are pro gun freedom. In this country we have laws to protect people for all kinds of things; laws that involve waiting periods. For example, one has to wait a good amount of time and apply/test to drive a car, to get married, to fly a plane..... How on earth did we ever come to believe one had the right to have a gun in an instant? States who have put more time and evaluation into getting a gun, have proven there is less gun violence. Please take the responsibility to move towards less violence. It is only common sense.

Sincerely,  
Paula Smith