

## TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO

### L.D. 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

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Salisbury, and members of the Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety, 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. 551.

The exceptions in the law prohibiting a firearm within 500 feet of school property were narrowly defined intentionally to make it clear we don't want guns on or near school property. The law has been on the books in Maine since 2009, and we believe most gun owners have long been aware of the prohibition. This would include the discharge of a firearm within 500 feet of school property. Discharge of a firearm within 500 feet of school property, even for self-defense or to protect the person's property, could still place school students or staff in jeopardy.

School Boards and superintendents support the current law as one measure that can help keep students, teachers, and other school staff safe.

The Secretary of State recently noted the prohibition of guns on school grounds makes her job a bit easier when it comes to enforcing the prohibition of guns at polling places, since many public schools are used for that purpose.

We urge you to keep current law in place and vote ought not to pass. The restriction in current law is a small inconvenience compared to the safety of the students we serve and the school staff we employ.