



Maine Education Association

Grace Leavitt **President** | Jesse Hargrove **Vice President** | Beth French **Treasurer**
Rebecca Cole **NEA Director** | Rachelle Bristol **Executive Director**

**Testimony
In Support of
LD 1011 An Act Requiring the Reporting of Stolen Firearms
and**

**LD 1340 An Act to Prohibit the Sale or Possession of Rapid-fire Modification Devices
Grace Leavitt, President, Maine Education Association
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety
May 8, 2023**

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

My name is Grace Leavitt. My pronouns are she, her, hers. I am serving as President of the Maine Education Association while on leave from teaching Spanish in MSAD 51. I have over 43 years of classroom teaching experience with 20 years as a National Board Certified teacher. The MEA represents nearly 24,000 educators in our Maine system of public education in pre-K-12 schools as well as in our institutions of higher education, both the University of Maine System and the Maine Community College System, along with students in teacher prep programs as well as many retired educators.

I am testifying on behalf of MEA in support of both LD 1011 An Act Requiring the Reporting of Stolen Firearms and LD 1340 An Act to Prohibit the Sale or Possession of Rapid-fire Modification Devices.

Early last month, MEA submitted testimony in support of other measures that proposed several ways to increase gun safety—LDs 22, 60, 168, and 582. And MEA will continue to support ways that may help to prevent gun violence and may help to keep our students and our educators in our schools and on our campuses safe, along with all people in our communities. You cannot separate our schools from our larger communities. We cannot only be concerned with safety in our schools. Our students and our educators are part of our communities. What happens outside of schools affects what happens in our schools. So MEA will continue to support common sense measures that, hopefully, reduce the number of headlines like the one from just two days ago—“9 dead and 3 in critical condition after mass shooting at Texas outlet mall” (NBC News, May 6, 2023). I can only hope there is not another headline like that one while I write this testimony or while you sit in the hearing and listen to others’ testimony and read the many testimonies that will surely be submitted along with this one.

And some will say, “That couldn’t happen in Maine; that isn’t going to happen in Maine.” But it did. And we all know, whether in the forefront of our minds or deep down inside our hearts, we all know that it will happen in Maine, just as it continues to happen everywhere else.

Oh wait, it DID happen in Maine. Please tell me our memories are not so shortened that we don’t recall “Shooting in Maine on 295; Man fired on motorists after killing 4, including his parents” (USA Today, April 19, 2023)—less than a month ago.

LD 1011 calls for requiring you to report if your firearm is stolen. You would report if your car were stolen, wouldn’t you? You would report if other valuable items were to be stolen, wouldn’t you? Why would you not report that a lethal weapon was stolen? What could be the reasoning behind a failure to

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report that? Yet apparently, it happens—and then there are even more guns out there somewhere, ready to do harm. Will a law requiring this prevent it from happening? Maybe not, maybe yes. It is that ‘maybe yes’ that may, just may, help prevent a tragedy. That is all we can hope for—to maybe help prevent a tragedy. But at least let’s do that!

LD 1340 is even more, much more important. If we can’t prevent these tragedies, we can reduce the likelihood, and we most certainly can reduce the number of victims when such horrific events occur. LD 1340 will do that—at least reduce the number of victims, reduce the number of fatalities, by reducing the availability of weapons of mass destruction. Again, not total prevention—but we must do what we can to possibly prevent more of these headlines.

A friend’s reaction to the most recent tragedy, the one two days ago in Texas, was that ‘at least it wasn’t more people who were killed,’ and then they were horrified that they even initially reacted to the news that way, to think that at least it was ‘only’ nine deaths. ‘Only’ nine people gone, ‘only’ all their families’ and friends’ lives changed forever. ‘Only’ their communities affected.

It is not ‘only’ the families, friends, communities of the victims whose lives are forever impacted by these grotesque acts of violence. It is ALL of us.

Please do what you can to increase the safety of all of us, and to reduce the horror and the needless, senseless deaths of innocent people. Please vote ‘ought to pass’ on LD 1011, and especially LD 1340.

Our children, all of us, are depending on you to do the right thing.

Thank you for your service to the people of our beautiful state. Let’s do what we can for our state to be both beautiful and safe.