

LD 1561- An Act to Restore Firearm Rights and Hunting Privileges to Persons Previously Convicted of Certain Nonviolent Felony Crimes

Testimony Before the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety

Mr. Daniel Denicola
Retired Veteran

April 7, 2023

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

My name is Dan Denicola from Newport, Maine and I am testifying in full support of LD 1561.

In May of 1988, I was a twenty-year-old man on leave from the United States Army. As is the case with most people I've ever talked with, I made a big mistake in my youth. Little did I know, however, my Second Amendment rights would be taken from me for the rest of my life.

I regrettably made the mistake of breaking into a local man's camp with my friends and using his lake front property for a weekend. I was charged with the non-violent Class B crime of burglary, but, since I was in the armed forces, I did not have to refrain from the possession of firearms and dangerous weapons. Nonetheless, years later when I settled down back in my home state and applied for my open carry permit, I was denied, being cited as a criminal felon.

It's been 35 years since that mistake. I feel like I have paid my dues to society in full. 35 hunting seasons have come and gone, and with each one, my desire to sit out and hunt again like I did with my dad gets stronger. I have an adult son now, and he has his own son and daughter. It hurts me to think I could be spending each Fall with my grandson, Jayce, and knowing that's as close as I'll get to ever actually sharing that bonding moment. Just the thought.

I know this bill will simply be voted out of committee on party lines, and that my testimony probably won't change any minds, but it would bring so much joy to all of my family if this bill were to pass. As a 56-year-old man, I just want to go hunting again.

Thank you.