

Betsy Williams

LD 2086

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen and members of the Judiciary,

My name is Betsy Williams. I live in Brunswick and I am writing in support of LD 2086, An Act to Amend the Law Governing the Disposition of Forfeited Firearms, as amended to address the use of semi-automatic weapons.

My faith as a Unitarian Universalist, a religion deeply tied to the near universal religious principle to “love thy neighbor as thyself,” compels me to speak the truth in love, and to speak out for LD 2086 today.

Over the years, policy debates about guns have leaned heavily on principles of fairness to individuals (responsible gun owners) and individual rights (2nd Amendment). These democratic principles—fairness and citizens’ rights—are also at the heart of my faith. And as legislators I am aware that they are foundational to the work you do. But when it comes to guns, the essential question centers on our love of neighbor: how can we prevent our citizenry from harming themselves and each other?

The truth today is that we live in an increasingly dangerous world due to the proliferation of guns. Whereas 20 years ago we were worried about handguns and rifles, today we are faced with mass murders due to the new weapon of choice and availability: semi-automatic weapons. Whereas 20 years ago we faced our first mass murder of children in elementary school, today mass murder is so common that firearm fatalities are the leading cause of death of children and teenagers in the United States.

As the saying goes, you don’t need to be a rocket scientist to understand why. LD 2086 addresses the most obvious of all preventative gun safety measures in two ways: reduce the number of guns available by destroying ones used in committing crimes and reduce the incidents of mass murders by reducing the fire power of semi-automatic guns. These measures are preventative, not punitive. They respect Maine’s long history of responsible gun ownership while confronting the reality that the proliferation of all guns, and the availability of semi-automatic weapons, has changed the calculus for safety regulations.

I know that every one of you want Maine citizens to be safe. If not measures such as these, what will you do? If not now, when? Please vote OTP on LD 2086 and help us all to better love and care for our neighbors. Thank you.