

Senator Baldacci, Representative Roberts and esteemed members of the Inland Fisheries and Wildlife committee, my name is Tyler Brown and I am speaking today **neither for nor against** LD 439, "An Act to Preserve Maine's Sporting Heritage and Enhance Sporting Opportunities for Maine's Youth by Allowing Maine's Youth to Hunt on Sunday".

I had the privilege of being a member of the stakeholder's group that worked to create a survey at the behest of the 130th legislature examining the issues surrounding hunting on Sunday. The group was composed of representatives from Maine sporting groups, Landowner organizations, MEDIFW, legislators, hunters and landowners. This group worked with the internationally renowned wildlife policy research firm Responsive Management to create an unbiased and thorough investigation into the issue of Sunday hunting, providing the first in depth look across three demographic groups, hunters, landowners and the general population among three distinct regions of Maine.

I would highly encourage the committee to read this survey and have provided some key points and research for your consideration.

In regards to support or opposition to Sunday hunting, 69% of hunters are in support with 23% opposed, within the general population 34% are in support with 54% opposed and amongst landowners 25% support with 71% opposed. It is prudent to note that there is a subsection composed of landowners that own 100,000 acres or more with 20% in support and 80% opposed.

Concerning the access of private land that we enjoy here in Maine, the survey found that 65% of hunters, 61% of the general population and 60% of landowners do not currently post their land. Another question found that 64% of the landowning general population, 78% of both landowning hunters and non-hunting landowners allow hunting access. The final and most concerning metric was that 32% of the general population, 21% of hunters and 44% of landowners responded they would be more likely to restrict hunting access to their land should Sundays be opened to hunting. Should 44% of landowners close their property that would result in nearly 10 million acres of land closed to public access.

Finally I wish to share a comparison of Maine's hunting days for whitetail deer to other New England states.

**Maine:** (79) days for expanded archery, (49) for statewide archery, (24) days for firearms, (1) day for Maine resident day, (12) days for black powder.

**New Hampshire:** (92) days for archery in some zones and (85) in others, (26) days for firearms, (11) for black powder (Note: Starts and ends before Maine's season)

**Vermont:** (76) days for archery, (16) for firearms and (11) for black powder.

**Massachusetts:** (48) days for archery, (12) for shotguns only and (18) for black powder.

These metrics show that Maine has similar season lengths for the majority of whitetail deer hunting seasons compared to our neighboring states. This data infers the question of whether or not opening Sunday is necessary, given the potentially damaging results to landowner relations and Maine's land access traditions. I humbly ask that we weigh these concerns very carefully when considering the proposals heard today and utilize all of the information available when making policy decisions that will affect future hunting opportunities here in Maine.

Thank you all very much for your time in considering my testimony.