

Lawrence Reichard
Belfast
LD 303

To members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety:

Greetings. I am writing to you to express my firm opposition to LD 303. Maine doesn't need armed paramilitary camps under the best of circumstances, or any circumstances, and these are not the best of circumstances. As you know, this is a time of particularly strident and violent discourse in this country. One need look no further than last year's assassination attempt on President Trump for evidence of this, and LD 303 would only add fuel to this fire.

We already have an estimated 393 million guns in this country. That's the highest number in the world, and amounts to more than one per person. And there are about 20,000 homicides per year in this country. We don't need paramilitary camps to add to this already very violent and volatile dynamic.

Historically, it is right-wing and fascist groups and organizations that have created paramilitary camps, and these groups are not operating in the interest of, or in support of, democracy. On the contrary, they are universally anti-democratic.

More than 400,000 Americans died fighting fascism in World War II. My father, who was in the Air Force, was shot down behind fascist lines in Croatia, and was lucky to survive the war. Those 400,000 brave men and women didn't die so that heavily armed fascists can train here in the homeland in a thinly disguised attempt to undermine democracy here in our country, in our home.

For all these reasons I urge you in the strongest possible terms to vote against this license to undermine and threaten public safety, democracy and the rule of law in this country.

Thank you,

Lawrence Reichard
Belfast