

Katherine Ahrens  
YARMOUTH  
LD 486

Dear members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee,

I am writing in opposition to: "LD 486 - An Act to Remove the Duty of an Individual Exercising Self-defense to Safely Retreat or Abstain from Performing Certain Acts upon Demand."

I am an epidemiologist, statistician, and public health professor. I have worked in public health for nearly 20 years and published 150 papers in medical journals. I am well qualified to assess the public health impact of this proposal "stand your ground law".

The first principle of your committee should be "do no harm". This bill will do harm. First, these laws encourage people to take the law into their own hands without calling on law-enforcement officials who are trained on how to intervene in dangerous situations. This discourages de-escalation and may encourage people to "shoot first, ask questions later." These laws make people feel like it is their job to do traditional police work.

A 2022 study of 41 states in JAMA Network Open (Esposito et al) found that "stand your ground" laws were associated with an 8% to 11% national increase in the monthly rates of homicide and firearm homicide.

We don't need any increase in gun deaths in Maine. We have had enough of these deaths. Say no to this law.

Katherine Ahrens  
Yarmouth