

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus, and members of the committee. My name is Thomas Tieman, and I live in Auburn, Maine. I am a retired industrial machinery safety system design engineer.

The change to Sec. 1. 17-A MRSA §108, sub-§2, ¶C removes the duty of a person exercising self-defense in an encounter to, if the person can do so safely, retreat from the encounter or comply with a demand to abstain from performing an act that the person is not obliged to perform before using deadly force. The change is too broad and will have unintended consequences.

- Self-defense occurs when you act to stop an attack against you.
- Vigilantism is when a person decides to take proactive steps to harm another, even when it is unnecessary and walking away is a safe option, perhaps even in a misguided attempt by civilians to “punish” criminals.
- The key difference between self-defense and vigilantism is the use of deadly force without a duty to retreat.

Maine law already allows a person to use reasonable force to defend themselves against an attack. This law would allow a person to kill another, even when there was no actual danger of harm...just because a person “felt” threatened by another. When a person chooses not to retreat or de-escalate the situation, where retreat or de-escalation would be a safe and easy option, the law should hold the person to a higher standard to justify his use of force as 'reasonable'.

Simply removing the duty to retreat opens the door to unregulated deadly force and legalizes vigilantism. The proposed bill is too broad and creates more problems than it solves. If the duty to retreat is removed, Maine will see an increase in homicides, as other states across the nation have seen. Please reject the self-defense law that has worked in Maine for many years by opposing LD 486.