

Karen Prieto
Brunswick
LD 486

Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee
Maine Legislature

Re: STRONG CONCERNS about 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

Dear Members of the Committee,

Thank you for your work in keeping our communities safe. My name is Karen Staples Prieto - I grew up in Topsham, and now live in Brunswick after many years out of state.

Today I'm writing to express concern about a proposal that would render our communities LESS safe: 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.

Colloquially, the components of this bill are referred to as "stand your ground." Statutes of this nature have been implemented in multiple states with detrimental effect. My understanding of this bill in plain language is that it would allow Mainers to defend themselves with deadly force *even if* they have a clear way to leave the situation with complete safety. This "shoot first, ask questions later" philosophy is terrifying.

I'm reading that Stand Your Ground laws in other states have had the opposite of their intended effects by encouraging escalated violence. For example,

* In 2017, a study by Humpheys, Gasparrini, & Wiebe (JAMA Internal Medicine) concluded that Florida's stand your ground law was associated with a 24.4% increase in homicide and a 31.6% increase in firearm-related homicide.

* In 2018, analysis by Ukert, Wieb, & Humphreys (Preventative Medicine) found that the largest negative impact on neighborhoods that initially had the lowest homicide rates before the law was enacted.

Maine already has a solid reputation as a safe place to live. This bill does not provide any community benefit strong enough to outweigh the risks. Please vote "ought NOT to pass" for LD 486. Thank you for your careful consideration.