

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus, members of the Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety.

I am Dr. Allen Browne. I am a retired pediatric/trauma surgeon. i served in the U.S. Army for three years. I was an occasional hunter. I live in Falmouth.

I am testifying in opposition to LD 486. This bill does not improve gun safety. This bill would change the nature of gun violence in Maine by encouraging the escalation of violence and prohibiting law enforcement, prosecutors, and juries from considering whether a person could have merely walked away from a conflict.

LD 486 removes a duty to safely retreat and introduces a shoot-to-kill vigilante mentality. Florida saw an increase of 32% in firearm homicide rates after a similar law was passed. In 79% of Florida Stand Your Ground cases, the assailant could have retreated rather than shooting and killing. In 68% of the cases the person killed was unarmed.

Stand your ground laws such as LD486 have been associated with an 8% increase in overall homicides and firearm homicides and significant increases in firearm injuries, associated emergency room visits and associated inpatient hospitalizations nationally in states that have passed such laws. They do not have any positive effect.

Maine has a traditional self-defense law. People can use force to defend themselves. In public a person cannot ignore a clear way to safely leave the situation. LD 486 dose not improve the situation.

I encourage the committee to stop this bill.

Thank you for this opportunity. I would be happy to answer any questions you might have.

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