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LD 1109

I'm contacting in opposition to LD 1109 - An Act to Reduce Gun Violence Casualties in Maine by Prohibiting the Possession of Large-capacity Ammunition Feeding Devices.

Many firearms come from the factory with devices that feed between 15 to 30 rounds, some hold more, some less depending on their configuration and purpose. Ten is a number chosen out of thin air for reasons of political theater. It doesn't seem likely such a ban would reduce gun violence casualties. Consider that one of the Columbine shooters used a Hi-Point 995 carbine rifle, which uses 10 round magazines. He just carried 13 of them. Similarly, the Virginia Tech shooter used handguns and 17 magazines, mostly of 10-round (but also some 15-round). Two of the highest profile mass shootings in recent history and shooters used 10-round magazines; they just brought a lot of them.

Homicide victims are usually shot at less than 10 times. A Department of Justice report from 2004 about the previous Federal Assault Weapons Ban, a report which Senator Dianne Feinstein, the creator of that ban, linked on her official website, states that most studies say the information they can obtain shows fewer than 10 shots are used to kill most murder victims, meaning that a 10-round limit isn't likely to have a measurable effect on murder rates. "Specific data suggests that relatively few attacks involve more than 10 shots fired." The report went on to say: "Gun murder victims are shot two to three times on average according to a number of sources, and a study at a Washington, DC trauma center reported that only 8% of all gunshot victims treated from 1988 through 1990 had five or more wounds," though they note that number of gunshots may not be representative of the total number of shots fired. However, the report also states: "the few available studies on shots fired show that assailants fire less than four shots on average, a number well within the 10-round magazine limit" adding "it is usually unclear how many cases, if any, involved more than 10 shots."

Why should average citizens have more than 10-rounds? For one thing, some law enforcement officials support it. The County Sheriffs of Colorado (CSOC) is a joint association of Colorado's 62 sheriffs. A position paper released by the CSOC states law enforcement officers carry magazines with more than 10 rounds because sometimes more than 10 is needed to neutralize a threat. For this reason, the CSOC believes law-abiding citizens should also have the right to higher capacity than 10-round magazines, noting that in high-stress situations it may take several rounds to stop an attacker. The CSOC cites instances in which, if there had been more than one attacker law enforcement would be attempting to solve a murder, rather than arresting a criminal stopped during a crime. The CSOC further calls the proposed 10-round limit "arbitrary," stating: "When seconds matter, County Sheriffs of Colorado do not want to deny a law-abiding citizen the ability to defend himself and his family based on an arbitrary limit on how many bullets should be in one magazine."

What good would a so-called of "Large-capacity Ammunition Feeding Devices" ban do? The answer seems to be not much good at all, it would not have stopped mass shootings like Virginia Tech or Columbine and it won't impact the majority of homicide victims who are shot at less than 10 times. Determined mass shooters can, and have, just carried more magazines anyway. And it may end up doing more harm than good if law-abiding people aren't able to effectively defend themselves against multiple attackers or an attacker that has high-capacity magazines.

For these reasons I urge the committee to vote "Ought Not To Pass" on LD 1109.