

Testimony to the Judiciary Committee's Public Hearing on: LD677, **An Act to Update the Statutory Definition of "Machine Gun" and Prohibit Possession of a Rapid-fire Device**

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Members of the Committee:

My name is the Rev. Dr. Stephen Hastings, a resident of Winthrop. I submit testimony on behalf of the Maine Conference of the United Church of Christ as the Chair of its Social Action Committee *in support of LD677*.

I write representing Christians and people of faith from a Congregational tradition who follow one known as the "Prince of Peace" and "the restorer of streets to live in." We feel called to action by events of gun violence and mass shootings in our State and Nation. We have long advocated for restrictions on rapid-fire, high-capacity guns. In 2013 the Maine Conference of the United Church of Christ adopted its own Resolution called An Urgent Call for the Prevention of Gun Violence. Twelve years on we still feel its urgency. We remain committed to: its intent to create safe and uplifting community with less grief and fewer victims; and its resolve to:

- Ban the sale and possession of high-capacity rapid-fire weapons by individuals.

LD 677 and other legislation before the Maine Legislature will help do this.

As it says in scripture, "Faith without works is dead." Gun Violence Prevention is work that needs to be done. Please take firm action in the name of those who died in Lewiston and many other cities, towns, and schools across our nation, and on behalf of those who may yet be spared from the worst assault enabled by high-capacity rapid-fire weapons.

Submitted by,
The Rev. Dr. Stephen Hastings
Maine Conference United Church of Christ
Social Action Committee, Chair
Winthrop Resident