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Testimony Neither For nor Against:

L.D. 1049 - An Act to Eliminate the Duty to Inform a Law Enforcement Officer When Carrying a Concealed Weapon without a Permit

L.D. 829 - An Act to Standardize the Laws Regarding the Carrying of Concealed Handguns in State Parks

L.D. 998 - An Act Regarding an Employer's Authority to Prohibit an Employee from Storing a Firearm in the Employee's Vehicle

L.D. 424 - An Act Concerning the Concealed Carrying of a Handgun by an Individual Who is 18 years of Age but Under 21 years of Age

Good afternoon, Senator Carney, Rep. Kuhn and members of the Judiciary Committee.

My name is Margaret Groban. I live in South Portland. I recently retired after a 30+ year career as a federal prosecutor in Maine focusing on firearms and domestic violence and the intersection between the two. I served for years on Maine's Domestic Violence Homicide Review Panel. I am adjunct faculty at University of Maine School of Law where I co-teach a class on the Second Amendment and the Regulation of Firearms.

It is my extensive experience with firearm laws that leads me to submit comments on L.D. 1049, L.D. 829, L.D. 998 and L.D. 424. All these proposed bills seek to expand the current permitless carry laws in Maine in ways that could endanger law enforcement, harm our communities and restrict the property rights of employers.

By way of background, in 2015, Maine enacted a law allowing persons who are not otherwise prohibited from possessing a firearm to carry a concealed handgun without a permit. This law is limited to persons 21 or older unless the 18-20 year old has served in the armed forces. At the same time, Maine enacted 25 MRSA § 2003-A, requiring a person carrying a concealed handgun without a permit who "comes into contact with any law enforcement officer" to "immediately inform that law enforcement officer of the fact that the individual is carrying a concealed handgun." LD 1049 would eliminate this duty to inform, placing law enforcement officers at risk. Law enforcement officers place their lives at risk every day to make Maine communities safe. Not allowing them to know when a person is carrying concealed without a permit is creating a dangerous situation for both the officer and the person carrying the concealed weapon. This is especially important since a person carrying without a permit has not demonstrated knowledge of firearm safety, good moral character and passed a background check - the requirements to obtain a permit.

Moreover, current Maine law also requires permits - and the demonstrated knowledge of firearm safety, good moral character and a background check - before allowing concealed carry: (1) in State Parks; (2) by an 18-21 year old; and (3) in an employee's car on an employer's property. Elimination of these permitting requirements in LD 829 (State Parks),

LD 998 (an employee's car) and LD 424 (an 18-20 year old) and the basic protections they provide could potentially endanger Maine communities. This is particularly true of LD 424 that would allow an 18-20 year old to carry a concealed weapon without any training and without adult supervision. It hampers law enforcement's ability to stop a youth under 21 and also presents dangers to both the youth and the community. Not only are firearms the leading cause of death for 18-20 yos but, unfortunately, 18 to 20 year olds commit gun homicides at triple the rate of adults who are 21 and older.

<https://everytownresearch.org/rankings/law/minimum-age-to-purchase>