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LD 677

I write in strong opposition to LD 677, “An Act to Update the Statutory Definition of 'Machine Gun' and Prohibit Possession of a Rapid-fire Device.”

This bill is a blatant overreach that recklessly redefines “machine gun” in a way that directly contradicts federal law and threatens the rights of law-abiding firearm owners. The National Firearms Act (NFA) has long provided a clear and enforceable definition: a machine gun is a firearm that discharges more than one round per single function of the trigger. LD 677 discards this objective standard and replaces it with vague, undefined terms like “rapid succession” and “materially increases the rate of fire.” These subjective phrases have no legal or technical basis, making them ripe for abuse and selective enforcement.

By failing to distinguish between illegal conversion devices and lawful firearm components such as binary and forced reset triggers, this bill criminalizes responsible gun owners for possessing items that federal authorities have already determined do not meet the definition of a machine gun. This is not about enforcing existing law—it is about redefining legal conduct as criminal activity.

Beyond its clear legal flaws, LD 677 is constitutionally suspect. It defies the Supremacy Clause of the U.S. Constitution, which establishes federal law as the supreme law of the land. When states pass conflicting or overly vague criminal statutes, they create legal chaos and expose citizens to unjust prosecution. Lawmakers should not be in the business of manufacturing legal uncertainty, yet that is exactly what this bill does.

LD 677 will not enhance public safety. It will not prevent crime. What it will do is entrap law-abiding citizens, encourage arbitrary enforcement, and expose the state to legal challenges. This bill is political theater at its worst—a knee-jerk reaction with no regard for constitutional rights or due process.

In stark contrast, LD 953 provides a responsible path forward by aligning Maine law with well-established federal standards. If legislators are serious about crafting meaningful firearm policy, they should reject LD 677 outright and focus on laws that are clear, enforceable, and constitutional.

I urge the committee to vote NO on LD 677. Maine must not set a dangerous precedent of criminalizing lawful firearm ownership through vague, unconstitutional legislation.