

My name is Joseph Chadbourne, and I am a resident from Portland testifying against LD 1109. I argue that this bill ought not to be passed because of the way it treats owners who possess these kinds of “large-capacity” magazines.

I believe that to classify a magazine which contains more than ten rounds as “large-capacity” is improper. In many cases, the factory magazines included with modern firearms already exceed this ten round limit - in this way, it would be more fair to consider a 30 round magazine to be “standard” rather than “large” in terms of its potential to hold ammunition. The same applies to other kinds of carrying options for ammunition as described in the bill, including belts and drums, among other kinds of ammunition-feeding devices.

Another key issue with this proposal is that there is no separation made between rifles, pistols, and other kinds of weapons, nor are there any distinctions made between weapons of different calibers. A bill which aims to ensure public safety ought to specify these details and list exactly which firearms ought to have their capacity to hold large amounts of ammunition restricted, and which firearms might be exempted. This bill aimed at making the public safer may end up inadvertently creating an environment where citizens are wary of carrying concealed firearms (given the new restrictions that would ultimately be placed on their sidearm.)

The lack of a strong grandfather clause in this bill is also extremely troubling to me and other Maine citizens - far more destructive weapons, like machine guns, which have been federally regulated for many decades have been grandfathered in different jurisdictions, and these weapons have since become more and more difficult to access for potential bad-actors. In comparison to these sorts of materials, the magazines which are now under discussion are much less dangerous. A generous (yet vigorous) amnesty for previous owners of standard-capacity, or in the language of the bill, “large-capacity” magazines is necessary. I believe that this kind of exception for Mainers who have possessed these magazines prior to them being made illegal is just and will not hinder public safety.

The final key issue I would like to address is that this bill criminalizes a wide (and peaceful) segment of the population - rather than dedicating crucial resources to policing violent crime, I fear that this bill will only serve to create more problems for law enforcement officers to solve, rather than helping to secure our communities.

Once again, I thank you all for giving me the opportunity to provide testimony on the subject of LD 1109. I completely agree with the State’s intention of preventing violent tragedies, and I commend our lawmakers for doing their utmost to keep residents safe. I feel that it is important, however, while protecting the people that we also maintain their rights. Thank you.

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Portland  
LD 1109

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