

Susan Payne
Cape Elizabeth
LD 1126

Dear members of the Committee,

I am Susan Payne. I live in Cape Elizabeth and am retired. I am a grandparent and am very concerned about the safety of my kids and grandkids, myself, and everyone in the State of Maine.

I urge you to vote in favor of LD 1126. This bill will hold unserialized firearm products to the same standards as other guns, thus reducing their appeal to criminals and increasing the ability of law enforcement officers to identify those breaking the law. This will reduce the threats these firearm products pose and will improve public and personal safety, which respecting Constitutional guarantees.

The problem: Some firearms fall through a loophole, which interferes with law enforcement's ability to solve certain crimes and keep the public safe. Home-finished and homemade weapons are as deadly as conventionally manufactured firearms and have recently been used in Maine and across the country, including in mass shootings in Pennsylvania and Iowa and in attacks on law enforcement in Montana and Colorado. However, they currently do not need to be serialized in Maine.

Unserialized firearm products are treated differently under the law than all other firearms in that they can be sold without the serial numbers that are essential for law enforcement. This, along with the fact that they are often sold anonymously with no background checks or sale records, allows anyone to quickly and easily build their own deadly weapons from untraceable kits

and components. Unserialized guns are now a leading source of weapons for people who wish to conceal their unlawful activity from law enforcement, engage in gun trafficking, and avoid criminal background checks they know they could not pass. And they're increasingly showing up in Maine.

Firearm serialization is crucial for law enforcement to identify and trace the guns that are used in crimes — firearms are normally required to be serialized, and removing a firearm's serial number is a felony. But the unserialized firearm industry exploits legal loopholes to sell its products without the serialization that all other firearms must have, making them untraceable. Because of that, law enforcement officers are missing an essential tool when it comes to

investigating crimes involving these guns. With the rise of 3D printing, these components are becoming more accessible, even enabling the creation of illegal, undetectable guns. These guns are even accessible to young children and teens—for whom firearms are the leading cause of death—who are ordinarily not legally able to purchase firearms. Because these products can be acquired with no background check, anyone of any age can get their hands on an untraceable weapon. Firearm serialization legislation will ensure that this doesn't happen.

Federal and state laws in Maine allow law enforcement to trace crime guns and help keep people with significant histories of violence or domestic abuse from accessing guns. While these measures are essential to preventing gun violence, unserialized firearm products often render

them useless. This is especially dangerous in a state like Maine, which took important steps in the wake of the mass shooting in Lewiston to strengthen its gun laws. In 2024, Maine expanded background checks to prevent people who are legally disqualified from buying firearms — and more often than not, these same people often turn to unserialized firearm products as an alternative.

These products are constantly being recovered in communities in New England, and have sadly made their presence known in Maine.

- In 2022, a 16-year-old in Maine shot and killed a man using an unserialized firearm assembled from parts ordered online anonymously, without a background check, for about \$600.

- Between 2017 and 2021, 25 unserialized firearm products were recovered at crime scenes in Maine and reported to the ATF. Between just 2022 and 2023, that number rose to 4. An increase in the rate of annual recoveries of more than triple.

The Solution: In 2021, the Biden administration classified some unserialized firearm products as firearms. With the future of these measures uncertain, Maine must now pass a strong state serialization law to ensure that dangerous, unserialized firearm products are treated the same as every other firearm under Maine law. This will ensure that Maine residents will be protected regardless of any future developments at the federal level, and law enforcement will be fully equipped to investigate and trace crime guns while respecting the Second Amendment. Reforms should aim to allow for the manufacture of a

firearm, frame, or receiver, including by a 3D printer, provided the firearm is promptly engraved with a federal serial number by a federal firearm licensee.

Creating these products while circumventing serialization requirements should be prohibited. These regulations would hold unserialized firearm products to the same standards as all other guns in Maine. They can help ensure this crisis does not undo the progress that Maine has made in protecting its residents and preventing gun violence while respecting Constitutional guarantees.