

Testimony of Thomas Cook before the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety.

**Not In Favor of LD 1109: An Act to Reduce Gun Violence Casualties in Maine by Prohibiting the Possession of Large-capacity Ammunition Feeding Devices**

Senator Carney and distinguishing members of the Committee on Judiciary, my name is Thomas Cook. I am a resident of Bowdoinham and have been a resident of Maine my entire life. I am writing today to express my lack of support for LD 1109. **I ask that you vote to deny this bill.**

I understand the emotional sentiment behind this bill. Any mass shooting, killing or attempt to do so is an absolute tragedy. However, I personally believe that if we want to reduce gun violence casualties in Maine then we should focus on the person pulling the trigger. Better yet, the goal should be reaching out to these individuals before they act out. We should attempt to get them the help they need and that our communities deserve.

When it comes down to brass tacks, as much as it is politically weaponized, the cliché and overused line "Guns don't kill people, people kill people." still rings true. If someone decides to take a life, they are going to do so by any means necessary. I understand that the idea is to limit the amount of damage that this proposed individual could inflict, but making any wide-reaching decision based on the actions of few just seems wrong to me. Personally, I do not own any of these magazines that hold higher counts of ammunition, but I understand their place for both self-defense and recreational shooting. I do not think that it is wise, or just, for any government to tell an individual what they can and cannot purchase based on the actions of others. If an individual has a criminal history, I understand limiting or eliminating the opportunity to acquire such equipment.

I do not know where you stand on this subject, but I felt that I should express my feelings as a fellow resident of Maine and a gun owner. Overall, I personally believe that the government should not have a say with how I spend my money and what I spend it on. **I do not think that our government should continue this pattern of attempting to solve issues by forcibly taking things away from people or limiting rights. Instead, the state should be focusing on providing services, programs and products that improve the mental, physical and financial wellbeing of the residents of Maine. Happy people do not cause harm other people, they spread happiness and protect those around them in their communities.**

I hope that I can count on you to raise the concerns of your constituents even if they contradict your own personal beliefs.

Thank you for your time.

Thomas Cook