



*Maine Gun Safety Coalition Testimony in SUPPORT of LD 1126: An Act Requiring Serial Numbers on Firearms and Prohibiting Undetectable Firearms.*

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and esteemed members of the committee. My name is Nacole Palmer, and I serve as executive director of the Maine Gun Safety Coalition. I am respectfully asking this committee to vote Ought To Pass on LD 1126, An Act Requiring Serial Numbers on Firearms and Prohibiting Undetectable Firearms.

Unserialized, untraceable, and unregulated guns are an ever growing threat to our communities. These guns – commonly called ‘ghost guns’ – are firearms assembled from unserialized components purchased online or even 3D printed at home. They are typically marketed as an “unfinished” frame or receiver. Because these components do not legally constitute a full firearm, they do not fall under current federal serialization requirements and vendors do not need to perform a background check before completing a sale.

No matter our political background, we can all agree that there is no good reason for someone to be able to dodge a background check by buying gun parts that are actively marketed as “untraceable” because they lack serial numbers. The fact is that *unserialized firearms are uniquely designed for criminal activity*. That’s why Maine Sheriffs support this bill: the ghost gun industry puts law enforcement at risk and makes it harder for them to do their jobs and protect us from criminals.

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. Serialized firearms are also required to have their disposition tracked by licensed dealers, which helps ensure that they don’t fall into the hands of individuals with histories of significant violence or domestic abuse. These safeguards are rendered useless by ghost guns.

Firearms assembled in a home are just as deadly as conventional weapons assembled in a factory, and they have been appearing in the hands of violent criminals in greater numbers every year. **Between 2016 and 2021, the number of ghost guns recovered**

**by law enforcement agencies nationwide increased by more than 1,000 percent<sup>1</sup>.**

Over the last several years, they have been used in mass shootings<sup>2</sup> and attacks on law enforcement<sup>3</sup> across the country. Maine is not immune to this new trend. In 2022, a 16-year-old Mainer who otherwise would not have been able to purchase a handgun was able to order parts online anonymously and assemble a gun which he then used to shoot and kill someone in the Bangor area.<sup>4</sup>

While the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives classified some unserialized firearm products as firearms and in turn required them to be serialized in 2021, the future of these regulations is uncertain. Requiring serialization is not onerous on law-abiding firearm owners - all of the 909 Federal Firearms License holders in Maine are authorized to assign a serial number to any unserialized weapon, and can mark it on a firearm with tools as simple as a cheap engraving pen easily purchased at a hardware store.

I respectfully urge the Committee to vote Ought To Pass on LD 1126 to keep Maine safe.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.justice.gov/archives/opa/pr/justice-department-announces-new-rule-modernize-firearm-definitions>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cnn.com/2024/03/17/us/pennsylvania-shootings-new-jersey-what-we-know/index.html>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.cbsnews.com/colorado/news/fort-collins-ghost-gun-shootout-ends-suspect-death-colorado-officer-wounded/>.

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.bangordailynews.com/2024/06/10/midcoast/midcoast-police-courts/fedex-shipped-gun-parts-to-maine-teen-before-fatal-shooting-lawsuit-says/#google\\_vignette](https://www.bangordailynews.com/2024/06/10/midcoast/midcoast-police-courts/fedex-shipped-gun-parts-to-maine-teen-before-fatal-shooting-lawsuit-says/#google_vignette)