



Janet T. Mills  
Governor

Michael J. Sauschuck  
Commissioner

STATE OF MAINE  
*Department of Public Safety*  
**MAINE STATE POLICE**

45 Commerce Drive - Suite 1  
Augusta, Maine 04333



William Ross  
Colonel

LTC. Brian P. Scott  
Deputy Chief

Testimony of Lieutenant Mathew Casavant  
Maine State Police

**In Opposition (885)**

An Act to Allow Certain Persons with a Permit to Carry Concealed Handguns to Possess or Discharge a Firearm on School Property

Sponsored by Representative White and Cosponsored by Senator Harrington  
Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and other distinguished members of the joint standing committee on Education and Cultural Affairs, my name is Lieutenant Mathew Casavant, and I am here to represent the Maine State Police and the Maine Department of Public Safety to testify in opposition of LD 885, “An Act to Allow Certain Persons with a Permit to Carry Concealed Handguns to Possess or Discharge a Firearm on School Property.”

The Maine Department of Public Safety and Maine State Police is opposed to LD 885 due to possible safety concerns. As an officer, responding to a report of an active shooter or armed person at a school is one of the most stressful, chaotic, and emotional experiences that a police officer will ever encounter. Although highly trained, a police officer in this situation is likely to experience heightened levels of adrenaline and cortisol coursing through their body as it reacts to the stress they are facing. The officer may also experience “tunnel vision” and “auditory exclusion” as they enter the school in search of a shooter or armed subject and will rely on their training to stop the active threat. Information regarding the suspect(s) identity will likely be limited, meaning the police officer will have to react to what they are observing in real time. As a result, you can understand that if a police officer in this situation encounters a concerned citizen that is also armed with a handgun and not identified in anyway as a police officer, it could potentially result in a tragedy and, at minimum, slow the officer’s response.

Another potential safety concern is the reality that a handgun that is concealed is not always truly hidden. Handguns come in different sizes, shapes, and colors and so do the holsters and packs that contain them. Additionally, some handguns are more suitable than others for concealed carry purposes. There are times when it becomes obvious that someone is carrying a handgun, namely when a handgun is carried under a tight shirt or becomes inadvertently exposed when bending over, such as to pick up a backpack or get a drink from a water fountain. If a teacher or student observes an unknown person



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carrying a handgun in a school, it could result in panic, school lockdowns, and calls to the police that are not needed.

On behalf of the State Police and the Department of Public Safety, we appreciate your careful consideration of these issues. Thank you for your time and we would be happy to work with the sponsor and the committee at the work session.

Respectfully,

Lieutenant Mathew Casavant