

Mayor and Council Offices

Mark Dion

Mayor

May 21, 2025



Testimony of Mayor of the City of Portland, Mark Dion

Before

The Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary

In Support of

LD 1743, An Act to Allow Municipalities to Prohibit Firearms Within Their Municipal Buildings and Voting Places and at Their Municipal Public Proceedings

May 21, 2025

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony on behalf of the City of Portland, in strong support of LD 1743.

This public safety bill allows municipalities, at their discretion, to adopt rules prohibiting firearms in three clearly defined government settings: municipal buildings, polling places, and official public meetings. By establishing this narrow but essential degree of local control, which mirrors the State's ability to limit or prohibit firearms in state buildings such as the Maine Statehouse, LD 1743 ensures that Maine's diverse communities can make decisions that reflect their own needs, values, and circumstances.

Maine is a state of remarkable geographic and cultural diversity. What's necessary or acceptable in a densely populated urban setting like Portland, for example, may not apply in rural communities. LD 1743 respects that diversity and respects local control. It imposes no mandate. It simply enables local governments to adopt policies that are responsive to the environments and communities they manage.

In Portland, where public meetings often draw large crowds, sometimes amid emotionally charged or high-stakes debates, we must have the ability to ensure the safety of our residents, staff, and elected officials. This bill gives us that tool.

LD 1743 is carefully constructed. It preserves all state and federal rights and protections for firearm owners. It exempts law enforcement officers, and it leaves school property rules untouched. The bill requires clear signage and authorizes only civil penalties for violations.

Similar measures have been adopted across the country in jurisdictions that have successfully balanced Second Amendment rights with the duty to maintain orderly and secure civic spaces.

When members of the public gather to engage in the democratic process, they should be able to do so without fear that a tense situation could escalate or become deadly in the presence of firearms. That is not an abstract concern—it is a reality that municipal leaders nationwide have had to confront, even in states with strong gun traditions.

As a former sheriff and state legislator, I believe LD 1743 strikes the right balance. It respects gun rights while acknowledging the growing challenges municipalities and local governments face in ensuring the safety, accessibility, and civility of local government.

By granting municipalities the option to act, LD 1743 reflects Maine's strong tradition of home rule and responsible local governance.

I urge you to support this important legislation. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mark Dion", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mark Dion
Mayor
City of Portland, Maine