

**Peggy McGehee  
Falmouth, Maine**

Good afternoon, Chairs Beebe-Center and Salisbury and Members of the Committee:

I am Peggy McGehee, a resident of the Town of Falmouth, and I speak in support of L.D. 168. I support universal background checks as someone who comes from a gun-owning, military family. Our son is a U.S. Marine captain who has served active duty in Iraq. My daughter's son, my grandson, lives in rural Maine and is learning to shoot and hunt. We, and all the law-abiding and responsible gun owners here today, lose nothing if this bill, and all of today's gun safety bills, pass. Our gun ownership will not be curtailed in any way.

None of us here today want our children or our grandchildren to risk their being exposed to gun shootings and mishaps because we made it so easy, here in Maine, for non-law abiding and irresponsible people to get guns—with no required permit, no background check, no waiting period, no prohibition on selling guns to criminals.

If these bills pass the Legislature this time, unlike the same or similar failed bills in prior legislative sessions, then we all-- law by law-- will have done what we can to stop the sale of crime guns. I have two points about this particular bill:

1. First, it in no way affects our 2d Amendment right to bear arms. Justice Clarence Thomas himself said in last year's U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Bruen*, that the Second Amendment protects only "law-abiding and responsible" persons. Non-law abiding and irresponsible persons have no Second Amendment rights. That is why there is no question that federally licensed gun sellers can lawfully require background checks. We just need to extend that requirement, as so many other states have, to private gun sellers.
2. We need our private gun sellers to run background checks to stop Maine from being a gun-source state for criminals from other states. Massachusetts requires universal background checks. So criminals in Massachusetts come to Maine to buy the guns they can't buy in their own state. (And, incidentally, they use those guns to bring dangerous drugs back to Maine, drugs that kill our kids.) In Canada's worst mass shooting, in 2020, when a man killed 22 people --- he traveled to Maine to get his guns at a private sale at a gun show, because Canada required private sale-background checks and Maine did not.

A school shooting in Missouri a few months ago, provides us a cautionary tale. A young man went into the school with a gun and killed a teacher and a student and injured seven other students. He had bought the gun from a private seller who did not run a background check on him, after he had been turned away by a licensed gun dealer for failing his background check. If Missouri had had a law requiring private sellers to run background checks, the shooter could not have bought the gun that killed the teacher and the student. If this Legislature passes this bill you may have stopped a future shooting in Maine the same way.

A 2021 survey of hundreds of Maine voters found that 70% of Mainers support universal background checks, including 63% of gun owners---and that the majority of both Democrats and Republicans believe that background checks should be required any time a gun is sold or transferred to a new person. So Maine is asking you to pass this bill—and not to wait until it's too late.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony.

Peggy McGehee