

Good afternoon members of the Judiciary Committee.

My name is Stephen Brough from Bangor and I must rise in opposition to LD168.

I ask the bill sponsors: why are you here AGAIN wasting the Legislatures' time? Question 3 was resoundingly defeated by a popular vote of Mainers in 2016. Our Governor weighed in the next year and flatly stated "The people of Maine have spoken". Background checks for purchases have increased every year since, giving credence to the fact Maine citizens like their firearms. The bill's sponsors are so tone deaf they refuse to listen to the people of Maine and its Governor.

I'm disgusted to see members of the Legislature engage in the underhanded parlor trick of going around the will of the people and attempting to pass legislation in much more confined environments friendly to your cause.

I and many others see this action for what it is and the most accurate way to describe it would require words not fit in this committee room.

I've asked the Gifford's Law Center directly to provide the number of firearms sold in Maine used in crimes and what percentage that is of the total firearms sales yearly. I get stumbles, and bumbles as they can point out only a few instances spread out over several years that, when looked at as a percentage of sales, is a statistically insignificant number. In 2022, there were 114,090 FBI background checks completed for Maine gun dealers and I would comfortably say thousands of private sales yearly. Those combined total sales vs. a few instances spread over a few years make this a non-issue.

Of those sales, it cannot be said for certainty whether those firearms were last sold in Maine or only originally so. Any subsequent sale could have taken place in New Hampshire, Vermont or Massachusetts and it could have been decades ago. A firearm purchased in Maine in the 50's and gifted to a family member out of state also makes using the original purchase state unreliable and should not be used by those thinking that this will help one bit. No statistics show if those crime-related firearms went through a straw purchase or were subsequently stolen and sold out of state on the black market.

By definition criminals don't follow laws so to think that this law will do anything to curtail firearms related crimes is foolish and naïve. It can't be proven that it would even prevent 1 death. The FBI's own data shows over 300 MILLION checks since 1998 with a success rate of .5%. 34 years of data; one half percent. That's it. Based on DENIALS only; nobody can say that each one of those sales would have resulted in a death. They happen with mistaken identities, common names shared with a criminal, or a felony bank fraud conviction from 40 years ago even after never having demonstrated any propensity towards violence. Maine ranks as the safest state in the nation, with firearms related deaths typically well under 20 per year; one half a percent is 20 is .1 people.

With all the deceptive practices and lack of listening on the part of the bill's sponsors, I urge you to vote OUGHT NOT TO PASS.