

**Testimony in support of LD 168 April 3, 2023**

Senator Beebe-Center and Representative Salisbury:

Thanks to you and to the members of the Joint Committee for the opportunity to join with others in support of LD 168. I'm Mark Segar, resident of Freeport, a retired educator and school administrator.

This bill is clear, balanced, and good for Maine. The well-being of our society, and its children, depends on a vital link, proclaimed by our nation's founding documents. A link between:

Rights - and responsibilities  
Individual freedom - and public safety  
Self-reliance - and duty to others  
Autonomy - and community  
Liberty - and justice.

Each balances the other. When out of balance, as they are today, dangers develop. This legislation addresses that danger.

The statistics are overwhelming. Gun violence is the leading cause of death for children in our country. No other developed nation even comes close.

The damage is lasting also for those who survive, children who carry the burden of trauma for a lifetime.

The harm done to children is irrefutable. As is the proof, that more inclusive background checks can save children's lives. Can help prevent one unregulated act in Maine from leading, however unintentionally, to injury, assault, or death, whether here, in another state or in Canada.

You may know the old Paul Simon song? "Slow down, you're moving too fast. You've got to make the morning last."

Childhood is the morning of a person's life. The time, as the song says, to be looking for fun. Not hiding from gun fire.

The morning of childhood should be lasting. We live our lives as adults but we carry our childhoods with us through all our days. The rights of young people should be preserved, that all may share in the pursuit of happiness. Especially before the obligations of adulthood accumulate.

This straightforward legislation has the power to prevent tragedy, without infringing upon rights.

In a state that maintains regulations for other safety concerns, the least we can do is to enact this legislative proposal, to protect our children's rights as well as our communities', to keep our state from being exploited as an invisible market for criminal intent.

Many other states do so. Maine should, too. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mark W. Segar, Freeport