

LD 168 To Senator Beebe - Center, Representative Salisbury and members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee:

My name is Barbara Arsenault and I live in Mexico, Maine. I appreciate the opportunity to testify for the passage of LD 168.

I have read this bill with the eyes of someone from northern Maine, who lives in a gun owning household, whose husband used to belong to the NRA and who believes in the second amendment. I believe that LD 168 has the right balance of safety measures with purchases of firearms and the common sense exceptions. For example, it does not eliminate gun shows but requires that a federally licensed firearm dealer performs a background check at the shows. Already, federally licensed firearm dealers are commonly at gun shows. Please note that this bill does not require background checks from sales or transfers between family members. This is an important point as there was a lot of misinformation previously on question 3 from the 2016 referendum. For example we have the 22 that belonged to my stepfather but when my stepfather had the diagnosis of Alzheimer's my mother wanted it out of the house. It is now safely secured at our home.

I am also for this bill as it would hopefully address the gun violence issues that we have in Maine. In 2022 9 out of the 14 homicides occurred in the 2nd congressional district, according to Bangor Daily News which details the homicides in Maine January 1st each year. Two of the 9 were in the Rumford/Mexico area. This bill respects the rights of gun owners while closing a dangerous gap in our background check system. Maine has a long history of responsible gun ownership and the gun owners know that with their right to own a firearm comes a great responsibility to ensure that it remains in safe hands.

Thank you for your time today. I encourage you vote for LD 168

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