

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan and members of the Education Committee. Good afternoon, my name is Henry Cossaboom and I am a junior at Casco Bay High School in Portland. I have lived in Maine for almost 4 years now. Maine has been a nice change of pace from Colorado where I lived for 10 years. One of the main reasons is I honestly like the lack of local school shootings and there are also less school shooting drills and lockdowns that happen in Maine. I firmly believe that the current proposed bills 52, 518 and 1557 should not pass because I feel that these changes will endanger the students, teachers and other staff of being harmed or killed. Many teachers may not want to be armed and what happens when one of these guns is stolen or misplaced? Having access to guns in schools is a ticking time bomb. It only takes one person and one gun to cause chaos. Most of us know or have heard of the Columbine shooting at Columbine high school in Colorado. Sol Pais was an 18 year old woman fascinated with this shooting and in 2019 on Columbine's 20th anniversary she took a plane from Florida to Colorado. She landed at DIA, immediately took an uber to Columbine and bought a gun at the gun store near the high school. Sol then took an uber to Mt. Evans in the mountains and dropped off the radar. Because her whereabouts were unknown the next day almost every single school in the state closed due to one person and one gun. She was later found dead due to a self-inflicted gunshot wound. Not even a month later in Highlands Ranch, Colorado the STEM school had its shooting where 18-year-old Devon Erickson and 16-year-old Alec McKinney went armed

to school with the weapons in their guitar cases. They opened fire in two different locations and sadly killed one student, Kendrick Castillo. 8 were injured 6 by the perpetrators but 2 were accidentally shot by armed security guards at the school. Guns in schools no matter who wields them do not solve this growing issue in American society. That was less than a mile from my home. My friends were there. Thankfully none were physically hurt but all were mentally and emotionally hurt. I was honestly scared to go back to school then. If these bills pass I would really consider dropping out and I know many others would do the same. It wouldn't be school anymore it would become a battle ground and filled with more than the typical stresses of school which is hard enough. I know many others would do the same as me. I value my education and I enjoy aspects of school and I want it to stay like that. Guns don't solve guns, that's one of the main things I've learned in the 16 years of my life and I hope you can see it that way too.