

# Maine Chapter

INCORPORATED IN MAINE

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



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April 26, 2023

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and honorable members of the committee on Education and Cultural Affairs I am a mother, a concerned citizen and a resident of Portland. I come to you today to voice the Maine American Academy of Pediatrics' (AAP) opposition to LD 52, LD 518, and LD 1557. We, the pediatricians of Maine, feel strongly that these bills will not increase the safety of our school children or their schools.

LD 1557 is particularly concerning as it would allow anyone with a concealed carry permit, including 18 year old students, to carry a firearm at school. Maine's concealed firearm permit law, 25 M.R.S.A. §2003 does not require firearm use or safety training. The potential for accidental shootings if this bill is allowed to become law is high. One can easily imagine scenarios involving accidental or intentional discharge leading to injuries or deaths.

LD 518: An Act to Allow Armed Security in Schools allows, "A school board may employ or engage by contract a school resource officer, private contractor or volunteer with applicable background and experience ..." Maine statute already permits "school resource officers" who, while not current municipal or state law enforcement officers, have experience as law enforcement officers, must meet recertification standards, and have undergone de-escalation training. The Maine AAP is not opposed to school resource officers as a whole; however, we are opposed to liberalizing the standards and training of individuals who will act in this role.

LD 52: An Act to Allow Certain School Employees to Carry Firearms on School Property requires that individuals interested in carrying a firearm on school property complete the Maine Criminal Justice Academy firearms training program, undergo basic school crisis management training, and maintain competency as required by the individual school boards.

Since 2013 the FBI has published bi-annual reports on active shooter incidents. Most recently, the FBI reported on all 333 active shooter incidents 2000-2019. In that report there were four cases where the active shooter was killed by citizens.<sup>i</sup> It seems unlikely that Maine school personnel would have more success in this regard than citizens as a whole.

In a 2019 report, the American Bar Association called for an evidenced-based, comprehensive plan to prevent schools shootings. In that report the data regarding arming school personnel is reviewed and found to be nonexistent.<sup>ii</sup> The report also reviews the risks of arming school personnel including: making law-enforcement action more challenging, accidental discharge of a firearm, and that a student intent on committing a school shooting would access the personnel's firearm rather than bringing one themselves.

Much of pediatrics focuses on prevention of adverse consequences. We ask you to look for evidence-based means to prevent school shootings rather than increasing the number of firearms in schools. The Maine American Academy of Pediatrics recommends the committee vote ought not to pass on LD 1557, 518, and 52.

Kristine M. Pleacher, MD

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<sup>i</sup> Active Shooter Incidents 20-Year Review, 2000-2019 — FBI Accessed 04/25/2023.

<sup>ii</sup> Gun Violence Policy Against Arming of Teachers (americanbar.org) Accessed 04/25/2023.