

Good morning, Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee. My name is Loren Arford. I have lived in Brunswick, Maine for over 35 years. I am here to testify in opposition to LD 1557.

I am a professional engineer who had the good fortune of teaching a high school pre-engineering program for 15 years. Now, as much as my busy retired life allows, I enjoy substitute teaching at Brunswick High School. As a teacher I have been through several years of lockdown protocol and practicing different solutions to student safety. I have participated in many discussions on what we, as teachers, would do in the event of an active shooter incident.

Let me be clear, I have no objections to responsible, law abiding, gun ownership and use. Firearms ownership is provided for by law and I respect this, yet guns are not permitted in schools where young people are formulating the maturity to handle life. As a retired teacher I have a major issue with allowing any person, excluding trained school safety officers, to carry concealed handguns within our schools. I remember discussing with my teacher colleagues if we should be allowed to carry a gun including concealed carry. My fellow teachers and I agreed that it was not our job to be armed security personnel – rather our job was to protect the students by keeping guns out of the school. We unanimously agreed we were not interested in carrying guns in the school. Most likely our fear and emotions would rule if there was an incident, and we were carrying – creating a MUCH more dangerous situation.

I ask you to please vote to keep our school kids safe, vote ought not to pass on LD 1557.