



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002
(207) 287-1440
TTY: (207) 287-4469

Joshua Morris

P.O. Box 246
North Turner, ME 04266
Phone: (207) 754-7829
Joshua.Morris@legislature.maine.gov

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Salisbury, distinguished members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee, I am Representative Joshua Morris, and I represent the people of Leeds, Turner, and Wayne. I am here today to present LD 551, *An Act To Strengthen Maine Citizens' Second Amendment Rights by Allowing the Discharge of Firearms on Private Property That is Within 500 Feet of a School Zone in Certain Circumstances.*

Under current Maine law, an individual has the right to defend themselves on their home premises. This is enumerated under Title 17-A, Chapter 5, Subsection 104. It states that we have a right to defend our lives and property by using force if necessary.

Current state law states that you cannot fire a firearm within 500 feet of school property with only a few exceptions generally extended to members of law enforcement or a school sanctioned event. It does not make an exception for someone acting in self-defense or defending their property.

This bill was brought to me by a constituent with this concern. Initially we asked the attorney general if someone was to act in self-defense and their property was within 500 feet of school property, could they be prosecuted for discharging a firearm. Understandably, without a scenario before them, the AG's office could not give us an answer.

I sponsored this bill because I believe every person has a right to defend themselves from threats on their lives on their property. Where they live should not make a difference, this bill is about ensuring that everyone has the same right to self-defense. While no one has been prosecuted we should ensure that no one ever will be prosecuted for defending themselves or their loved ones.

We have seen in recent years district attorney's races drawing interest and money from national groups. I am concerned that an activist DA could decide to prosecute

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someone who was acting in self-defense. This addition to the law simply guarantees that every Mainer has a right to defend themselves regardless of where they live.

Thank you for your consideration and I would be happy to answer any questions.