

Good afternoon, Chairs Beebe-Center and Salisbury and Members of the Committee. My name is Peter Fromuth, I'm the dad of a high school daughter and an attorney. I live in Yarmouth.

I speak today in support of L.D. 1340, a bill to criminalize rapid-fire modification devices, making their possession, sale, distribution, transfer or import a Class D crime.

In 1934, Congress passed the National Firearms Act sharply increasing the cost and difficulty of owning a machine gun. Machine guns became scarce and those that remained were very tightly regulated. But an industry emerged to make workarounds, to convert legal firearms into weapons whose rapid-fire capacity made them the functional equivalent of machine guns. That prompted the ATF to adjust its language to keep up with the technology, and Congress added further restrictions.

But, things didn't end there. Workarounds kept evolving until in the last several years advances in low-cost manufacturing, combined with internet-based imports, have created an enormous market for rapid fire conversion devices. The most popular one, the tiny auto sear attachment can be - -and often is - - made on a 3D printer, installed in seconds, and converts a semi-automatic to an automatic weapon able to fire 20 rounds per second. BINGO, the machine gun is back, and at \$20 - - it's cheaper than ever.

The federal government is trying to keep up. Congress amended the statutory definition of machine gun to cover any weapon that shoots more than one shot by a single function of the trigger - - thus without manual re-loading (26 U.S.C. § 5845(b)). It also amended the law to cover any part designed and intended to convert a weapon into a machine gun.

Maine's criminal law uses virtually the same machine gun definition as the U.S. Code. However, even though rapid-fire devices clearly fall within the pertinent language of the Maine Criminal Code (17-A, Chp. 43 § 1051) L.D. 1340 would significantly strengthen our protection against machine-gun-equivalent rapid-fire devices. It would create a new statute that defines and describes them and applies the same prohibition and Class D criminal penalty as now exists under our machine gun statute.

While these devices have no practical use in marksmanship, hunting or recreation, their ability to spray bullets at a fantastic speed gives them murderous capacity in criminal hands easily out-gunning law enforcement. Please help keep them out of criminal hands by voting ought-to-pass L.D. 1340.