

Testimony in Support of LD 1340 An Act to Prohibit the Sale or Possession of Rapid-fire Modification Devices

Good morning, Senator Beebe-Center, Rep. Salisbury and members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee. My name is Michele Stapleton and I live in Brunswick.

On December 14, 2012, at about 7:40 a.m. Beijing time, a man with a knife attacked a primary school as children were arriving, stabbing 23 children and an elderly woman. Though some of the children had fingers or ears cut off, none of the victims died.

Approximately 14 hours later and 7000+ miles away, Adam Lanza, carrying a AR-15, two semiautomatic pistols, and a shotgun, broke into the Sandy Hook Elementary School. In the span of about five minutes, Lanza visited fired 154 rounds and claimed the lives of 20 children and 6 adults.

Five years later and over 2000 miles away on October 1, 2017, Stephen Paddock, opened fire on a music festival on the Las Vegas Strip. In a ten-minute span he fired more than 1,000 bullets, killing 60 people and wounding at least 413. The ensuing panic brought the total number injured to approximately 867. This, the deadliest mass shooting in U.S. history was made possible by the use of bump stocks, which allowed Paddock to fire at a rate similar to that of automatic firearms.

I'm sure everyone is familiar with the saying "guns don't kill people, people kill people." However, the issue is not whether a gun can spontaneously get up and kill someone on its own. The issue is how incredibly easy it is to inflict carnage with some modern weapons. The differences among these three cases were not the assailants, but the lethality of the weapons they chose.

People intent on inflicting harm will use whatever they can put their hands on. Rocks, baseball bats, a chair, a knife or a gun. That's why it's vital to restrict what is available and who can get it. Mainers do not need rapid-fire weapons for hunting. Or for self protection. If we allow these devices to be sold here we're only asking for a repeat of the massacre we saw in Las Vegas.

In the Heller decision, Scalia said "Like most rights, the right secured by the Second Amendment is not unlimited." He also noted the "historical tradition of prohibiting the carrying of 'dangerous and unusual weapons.'"

Sources:

It's Time To Retire The 'Guns Don't Kill People — People Kill People' Argument. Guns DO Kill People, <https://medium.com/@mshammas/its-time-to-retire-the-guns-don-t-kill-people-people-kill-people-argument-60d91889f806>

Chenpeng Village Primary School stabbing, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chenpeng_Village_Primary_School_stabbing

District of Columbia v. Heller, 554 U.S. 570 (2008), <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/554/570/>