

March 5, 2024

LD#2086

An Act to Amend the Law Governing the Disposition of Forfeited Firearms

Good afternoon Senator Carney, Representative Moonan and members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Suzanne Kelly and I'm a resident of Bangor. I am a member of the Bangor Unitarian Universalist Church and Faith Linking in Action, both faith communities that value living in a peaceful and safe community. I appreciate this opportunity to speak in support of LD2086.

Over a decade ago my son lost one of his best friends to gun violence. The friend was at a party and a persistent, uninvited and obviously deranged man opened the apartment door and shot randomly into the joyful group with a handgun. He killed a lovely, promising young man. A singular, needless tragedy.

One main difference ten years later: we have a relentless demonstration of what the toxic mix of rage and easy access to assault weapons is capable of -- blowing everyone at that party away with a few quick swipes. It's all a tragedy but, for goodness sake, let's get rid of the assault weapons.

We in Maine have now seen what can happen. LD2086 represents the acknowledgment that we at least need to start tackling the dangerous proliferation of assault weapons and work towards a more full-bodied solution.

Just as responsible citizens have the right to bear arms, all citizens should have the right to go into a grocery store, walk down the street, or attend a party without fear of being blown away. I'm thanking you in advance for your careful, humane, and reasonable consideration of LD2086 and then deciding to vote "yes". Surely, we can do this.

Suzanne Kelly  
Bangor, Maine

We are fortunate to live in the wonderful state of Maine. But the horrific shooting in Lewiston last year was a stark reminder that even Maine is not immune from gun violence. Here is a quick look at just some other gun violence incidents that have occurred in Maine during the last few years.

**In Senate District 29** – A 17-year-old South Portland boy is currently awaiting trial for planning a school shooting. At the time of his arrest police seized assault rifles and a bullet proof vest from his home. Also in South Portland, police shot and killed a man who had fired shots during a domestic dispute. The man was armed with an AR-15 assault rifle.

**In Senate District 31** - Old Orchard Beach police responding to a shooting seized 36 guns, including several assault rifles, bullet proof vests, thousands of rounds of ammunition as well as drugs and cash. The man arrested was currently on bail for an unrelated drug charge. Also, an 18-year-old woman was arrested for a shooting in Saco. A 32-year-old woman was injured in the shooting.

**In Senate District 20** – An Auburn man was shot in the leg after several shots were fired during a drive-by shooting. Also in Auburn, a shootout at home over drug money owed resulted in a man being shot in the arm and the chest. Another Auburn man was arrested after shooting a gun outside his residence. He had a prior felony conviction for domestic violence and was not permitted to own a gun. A man was sentenced after robbing a store in Auburn. The man threw a rock through a glass window of the front door of the store, entered and stole 22 firearms.

**In House District 117** – A Portland man was sentenced to 15 years in prison after being arrested with four guns, cocaine and fentanyl and \$15,000 cash. A former Portland police officer was sentenced for falsifying an application to acquire a machine gun. A man was shot and injured at a strip club in Portland when a group of people who had been denied entrance to the club got in their car and fired several gunshots at the club.

**In House District 79** – A Paris man was sentenced for stealing several guns from a sporting goods store in West Paris. Police noted that not of all the guns had been recovered but that one had been used by a New Hampshire man to commit suicide. Also, a West Paris man was shot in the chest. Both of the people arrested in connection with the shooting had numerous criminal convictions. An Oxford County man was sentenced for being a felon in possession of firearms. Police seized 856 guns, including shotguns, rifles, handguns and assault rifles, and a large amount of ammunition from his home.

**In House District 36** – A Hampden man was arrested for killing his sister-in-law. He shot her ten times, even stopping to reload.

**In House District 78** – Rumford police shot and killed a 23-year-old man who confronted them with a rifle. Another Rumford man who had been charged with manslaughter in the shooting death of his brother was shot and killed by Maine State Police after he failed to appear in court. He was wearing a bullet proof vest and carrying a rifle when police confronted him. At the time

he was not permitted to own a gun. Earlier police had confiscated six guns from him including four AR-15 style assault rifles.

In **House District 111** – A Falmouth man pled guilty to distributing cocaine and possession of a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime. At the time of his arrest he had a loaded handgun next to the driver's seat in his car.

In **House District 89** – An Auburn woman was shot in a domestic dispute. She was taken to the hospital in critical condition. Later that day police found the man that shot her. He had a self-inflicted gunshot wound and died of his injuries. Also, Auburn police responding to a report of a drug overdose found drugs and firearms at a man's house. Police seized several guns including a .50-caliber weapon and hundreds of rounds of armor piercing/incendiary type ammunition.

In **House District 110** – A gas station in Cumberland was robbed by a man brandishing a handgun. The man eventually pled guilty to committing eleven armed robberies around Cumberland County.

In **House District 70** – A Skowhegan man was arrested after firing a handgun in a residential area. His neighbor reported the shooting had caused multiple holes in his siding as well as holes in his swimming pool. The man who shot the gun was highly intoxicated when he was arrested. Another Skowhegan man unintentionally shot himself in the shoulder while driving when he leaned over to fidget with his 9mm handgun.

In **House District 132** – A Biddeford man died in a shootout with police. The man had recently been released from prison after serving time for domestic violence charges. He was prohibited from owning a gun. Another Biddeford man shot and killed his landlord who was trying to evict him.

Other than the use of a gun there is no one defining characteristic of these incidents. And there is no one law that would prevent them. But we need to start somewhere. LDs 2238, 2224, 2119, 2086 and 2237 are just such a starting place.