

I

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I am testifying in support of LD 303, An Act to Repeal the Law Prohibiting Unauthorized Paramilitary Training.

The paramilitary ban was passed under the alleged premise of restraining the activities of Christopher Pohlhaus, who was establishing a neo-Nazi training camp in Springfield. However, this law does not specify what types of groups it applies to, meaning it also prohibits community defense against Nazis.

In Lincoln Heights, Ohio last month, associates of Pohlhaus and Maine resident Richard Levi Ward staged white supremacist rallies in the historic black community. The police not only let them spread their message of hate, but actively helped them do so. In response, the locals organized militias to run them out of town and keep themselves safe. This would be a crime in the state of Maine. Allowing this law to stand means you would be siding with hate groups.

Giving the current administration driving, if not codifying, such hatred, vulnerable persons need to retain the right to organize. Law enforcement will not protect them. In fact, the police are often whom they need firearms and training to defend themselves against. I remember a conservative legislator asking if this law could be used against BLM or Antifa. If the Democrats in this committee think that everything is fine as it stands, don't think for a second that a Trump-like Attorney General wouldn't use this law to crush opposition.

As for myself, I teach people how to make their own firearms. There are changes coming to ID laws and ATF Form 4473 that will make it very difficult or impossible for anyone who is not cisgender to buy a gun. I know for a fact that many extreme right-wingers consider my activities promoting civil disorder, as they've told me so.

In any case, I have not and will not let Maine's ban on paramilitary training affect what I do. The current political landscape necessitates preparing responsible people to fight against injustice.