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THE MAINE SENATE  
132nd Legislature

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**Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services on  
LD 116, An Act to Prohibit the Use of Piercing Guns  
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Good afternoon, Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services: I am Senator Rick Bennett of Oxford, and I have the honor of serving 14 communities in Western Maine in the State Senate. I am proud to be a cosponsor of LD 116, "An Act to Prohibit the Use of Piercing Guns."

I brought this bill forward after a constituent reached out about an issue she faces in her job as a licensed piercer who runs her own business. She is a great constituent who does all she can to give back to the South Paris community.

In her work as a piercer, she has heard complaints from customers who had terrible experiences with piercing guns. She has seen significant scar tissue and heard from customers about guns jamming and even gloves getting caught in the gun and then stuck inside a child's ear. In Maine, piercers who use single-use guns are not required to be licensed.

According to the Association of Piercing Professionals, piercing guns are not sanitized in a medically recognized way. This means that these guns can put clients in direct contact with the blood and bodily fluids of previous clients. Blood borne diseases, including the Hepatitis virus or common staph infections, can live for long periods of time on inanimate objects.

Piercing guns can also cause significant tissue damage. If you look at stud earrings, which are used to pierce ears, you will notice that most ear piercing studs are quite dull. In order to get the dull piercing through the lobe, the spring-loaded mechanism of the piercing gun must use incredible pressure and speed. Sometimes the earring only gets partway through the ear and gets stuck and technicians may not know what to do.

Even though many manufacturers' instructions and guidance from the licensing board prohibit it, some piercers who use guns do not stop at only piercing ear lobes. They may pierce cartilage, nostrils, navels, eyebrows, tongues, and other body parts with the guns, which can be dangerous.

Few clients are aware of the risks associated with piercing guns. Because the actual piercing is over so quickly – faster than a haircut or a manicure – and is legal and common, many consumers do not associate any complications with the gun, unless they become so severe that these need immediate medical attention.

My constituent knows far more about this than I do and I urge the committee to listen to her testimony. Thank you for your consideration today.