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Maine Association of Psychiatric Physicians

Testimony of David Moltz, MD

To the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety

132nd Maine Legislature

March 17, 2025

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus and Distinguished Members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee,

My name is David Moltz, MD, and I reside in Portland, Maine. I am a psychiatrist and I am here today representing the Maine Association of Psychiatric Physicians, in opposition to LD 486, the so-called "Stand Your Ground" bill.

In many states, stand your ground laws are known as "shoot first" laws, as in, "shoot first, ask questions later." This attitude may explain why, according to an analysis by the Tampa Bay News, 68% of the persons killed under Florida's stand your ground law were unarmed. I repeat: in 68% of cases where the shooter claimed fear of bodily harm, the victim did not have a weapon. Do we want to live in a world where people shoot first and ask questions later, or one in which we each have responsibility for preventing needless tragedy? If you think this is not an important question, ask the estimated 30 to 50 people who die every month as a result of these laws. Or better, ask their families.

As is often stated, Maine is the safest state in the nation. We do not need a law which according to the Rand Corporation leads to an average increase in homicides of 8%. On behalf of the Maine Association of Psychiatric Physicians, I urge you to vote ought not to pass on LD 486.

David A. Moltz, MD

Chair, Clinical Practice Committee

Maine Association of Psychiatric Physicians