

**Testimony of Jake Lachance**

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**Maine State Chamber of Commerce**

**Before the Joint Standing Committee on Labor**

**In Opposition to LD 998, "An Act Regarding an Employer's Authority to Prohibit an Employee from Storing a Firearm in the Employee's Vehicle"**

Sen. Carney, Rep. Kuhn, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary, my name is Jake Lachance, and I am a Government Relations Specialist for the Maine State Chamber of Commerce, which advocates for over 5,000 large and small businesses across the State of Maine. I am here to express my concerns regarding LD 998 and its implications for employer choice, business policy, and workplace safety.

LD 998 proposes to eliminate the requirement that an employee possess a valid concealed carry permit to store a firearm in their locked, personal vehicle on employer property. At its core, this legislation calls into question the fundamental right of private property owners, including employers, to establish policies that protect their property, employees, and customers. In Maine, as in many other states, private property rights are deeply valued. Employers bear the responsibility for maintaining a safe and secure environment, and they should retain authority to decide whether firearms are appropriate on their premises, including in parking areas.

Under current law, employers cannot prevent employees with concealed carry permits from storing firearms in locked vehicles out of sight. While some business owners may find this compromise acceptable, removing the requirement for a permit significantly broadens access without any form of training, vetting, or oversight. This change opens the door to increased liability and potential safety risks—particularly for businesses in sensitive industries or high-conflict environments.

Moreover, LD 998 blurs the line between public regulation and private policy. If enacted, it will impose a one-size-fits-all mandate on employers who may have legitimate reasons for limiting the presence of firearms on their property. This bill also raises concerns about legal exposure: if a firearm stored in a vehicle is stolen or misused, will the employer be held accountable, despite being unable to prohibit it?

To truly protect Maine's businesses and respect their autonomy, the Legislature should support employer choice in determining firearm policies on their premises. Public safety and constitutional rights are not mutually exclusive, but they require careful balance. LD 998 undermines that balance by stripping away employer discretion without adequate safeguards. I urge the committee to consider these concerns as you work through this piece of proposed legislation and many others like it. I am happy to answer any questions.