

Testimony in Opposition of LD 677 to the Committee on Judiciary
March 26, 2025

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and distinguished members of the committee

I am Peter Googins, a resident of the City of South Portland.

LD 677 represents a dangerous overreach that threatens the rights of law-abiding Mainers and blatantly contradicts the State of Maine Constitution. Article I, Section 16 of Maine's Constitution clearly states: "*Every citizen has a right to keep and bear arms and this right shall never be questioned.*" By redefining "machine gun" to include commonly owned semi-automatic firearms with parts that could "increase the rate of fire," this bill undermines that fundamental right. The vague language casts an unnecessarily wide net, potentially criminalizing responsible gun owners who make lawful modifications to their firearms for purposes like hunting, sport shooting, or self-defense. It sets a dangerous precedent where government overreach could chip away at Second Amendment protections under the guise of public safety.

Moreover, this legislation fails to distinguish between illegal firearm modifications and legitimate enhancements used to improve performance and reliability. Parts that reduce trigger pull weight or improve cycling efficiency do not convert semi-automatic firearms into machine guns, nor do they inherently make a firearm dangerous in the hands of responsible owners. By conflating these lawful upgrades with rapid-fire modifications, LD 677 threatens to erode not just gun rights, but also the personal freedoms Mainers hold dear. If passed, this bill would open the door to further restrictions, allowing the government to question and limit constitutional rights with vague, sweeping legislation — a direct violation of the spirit and letter of Maine's highest law.

Regards,
Peter Googins