



Testimony before the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary
March 26, 2025.

In support of:

- LD 677 An Act to Update the Statutory Definition of "Machine Gun" and Prohibit Possession of a Rapid-fire Device
LD 1126 An Act Requiring Serial Numbers on Firearms and Prohibiting Undetectable Firearms
LD 1109 An Act to Reduce Gun Violence Casualties in Maine by Prohibiting the Possession of Large-capacity Ammunition Feeding Devices

In opposition to:

- LD 953 An Act to Change the Definition of "Machine Gun" in the Maine Criminal Code

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Members of the Committee,

I am Rev. Susan Townsley, and I am testifying on behalf of the Maine Council of Churches, a nonprofit coalition of seven mainline Protestant member denominations that have more than 400 congregations in Maine with over 50,000 parishioners in care. My own denomination, the United Church of Christ, is a founding member. I am also testifying as the minister of South Congregational Church in Kennebunkport, which considers gun safety one of our two top priorities for serving our neighbors in love. Finally, I testify as a mother of young adults whose world is so rife with guns, they fear for their safety in a way that I never did at their age.

Love of neighbor grounds the work of the Council and of the church I serve. We take seriously the biblical imperative to **protect the vulnerable and hold those who harm them accountable.**

Maine's faith leaders and the congregations they serve know the trauma and grief of gun violence. Our pastors have buried those who have died by gun violence and have ministered to those who still struggle with trauma and grief. Right now, I am working through grief and anger with a family that lost a brother due to domestic violence and an un-serialized gun.

Policy experts will provide you with the technical and legal specifics on how prohibiting possession of rapid-fire devices, requiring serial numbers on firearms, and prohibiting possession of large-capacity ammunition feeding devices can and will keep Mainers safer by reducing gun violence in our state.

Maine citizens support such reasonable gun safety legislation in a significant majority.

We in the faith community are here to **speak to the moral imperative** to do so, and to **condemn our culture's idolatrous fascination with weapons designed to take human life in acts of mass shooting that leave people slaughtered, families shattered, and communities devastated.**

We urge you to be leaders with us in a vision for our future in which we are **willing to moderate our access weapons for the sake of public welfare, able and willing to uphold the principle that building common trust is more beautiful, courageous AND more historically true to American values** than the loud and selfish demands for unfettered rights.

As part of our faithful commitment to creating a more peaceful world, we come before you today asking that you **take action to turn our state from the path of fear and destruction caused by gun violence. We are asking you to vote Ought To Pass on LD 677, 1126, and 1109, and to vote Ought Not To Pass on LD 953.**

It is time to reclaim our homes, streets, schools, and workplaces from the threat of gun violence,

*Episcopal Diocese of Maine, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Presbyterian Church (USA),
Religious Society of Friends, Unitarian Universalist Association, United Church of Christ, United Methodist Church*