

March 26, 2025
Peter Fromuth, Yarmouth

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, Members of the Committee, good morning. I am a Maine public defender from Yarmouth, I testify today in support of LD 677 which updates the statutory definition of machine guns and bans possession of a rapid-fire device as that is defined in the text. While I strongly support both provisions, my remarks focus on the second.

For over 90 years, starting with the National Firearms Act of 1934, and by subsequent amendments, Congress has tried to end the civilian availability of rapid-fire devices due to the sheer danger to the public and our police.

By way of illustration, when I was in Afghanistan from 2009-2011 the rifle carried by my military protective unit was usually an M4 or M16. The guys said it had a rate of fire of about 12-15 rounds per minute, and in fully automatic mode it could discharge an incredible 600-800 rounds in a minute for a very brief time before overheating.

It is a fearsome weapon, designed to produce and it does produce mass casualties. It is designed, in short, for the battlefield. Maine is not a battlefield. No one wants it to be. Yet we allow sale, possession and use of rapid-fire devices such as bump stocks, auto sears, trigger cranks and other devices that produce equivalent or greater firepower to the weapons our military used in Afghanistan.

Today, when our police and sheriff's deputies go out on routine patrol very far from the Afghan battlefield or any other, they don't carry that kind of firepower. So, if they are unlucky enough to respond to a call and face to face with one of these weapons of war they will be out-gunned.

This danger is not theoretical. In 2017 from his window in the Mandalay Bay, the Vegas mass murderer killed 58 people at a music festival and injured 500. His arsenal was a dozen mostly AR 10 and 15 style semi-automatic rifles with scopes. But it was their bump stock upgrades to fully automatic that enabled the shooter to rain a hellfire of 1049 rounds on 558 casualties in 10 minutes.

Since the Las Vegas carnage the use of rapid-fire devices has increased astronomically, with the Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms Bureau reporting a 784% increase in recoveries of just one type, the auto-sear. Many of the dead and injured are our law enforcement.

There can be no sane rationale for exposing our police, our families, our neighbors, or our fellow Mainers to such lethality. Please give this bill your unanimous support.

Thank you