

LD 1743 - An Act to Allow Municipalities to Prohibit Firearms Within Their Municipal Buildings and Voting Places and at Their Municipal Public Proceedings

Memorandum of Opposition

Date: May 01, 2025

To: Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee Members,

From: Jonathan Martell

RE: LD 1743 - An Act to Allow Municipalities to Prohibit Firearms Within Their Municipal Buildings and Voting Places and at Their Municipal Public Proceedings

Members of the committee, I would like to express my Opposition of LD 1743 - An Act to Allow Municipalities to Prohibit Firearms Within Their Municipal Buildings and Voting Places and at Their Municipal Public Proceedings

My Name is Jonathan Martell, from Sanford.

I am a currently serving Sanford City Councilor, Lifetime member of the Gun Owners of Maine, Legislative Officer for the Sanford Springvale Fish and Game Club, NRA Range Safety Officer, and lifelong firearms enthusiast.

As a Sanford City Councilor currently service my second term, I would like to offer some perspective as to why this is a terrible idea. One word, "Lewiston"

That one word invokes fear in many people, and while this isn't the first time we have seen this legislation, that is a large reason why this should never have seen the light of day again.

We saw it in:

LD 351 An Act To Allow Municipalities To Prohibit Weapons at Municipal Public Proceedings and Voting Places -Died Between Houses, Jun 19, 2017

LD805 An Act To Allow Municipalities To Prohibit Firearms at Voting Places in 2021- Accepted Majority (ONTP) Report, Jun 15, 2021

What most people don't seem to know is that the Lewiston Bar was a "Gun Free Zone" per:

Title 17-A: MAINE CRIMINAL CODE

Part 2: SUBSTANTIVE OFFENSES

Chapter 43: WEAPONS. A person is guilty of criminal possession of a firearm if:

***A. Not being a law enforcement officer or a professional investigator licensed under Title 32, chapter 89 and actually performing as a professional investigator, the person possesses any firearm on the premises of a licensed establishment posted to prohibit or restrict the possession of firearms in a manner reasonably likely to come to the attention of patrons, in violation of the posted prohibition or restriction;***

Facts:

98% of mass shootings occur in "gun free zones"

Overriding our state pre-emption law against local firearms ordinances is Unconstitutional  
"Every citizen has a right to keep and bear arms and this right shall never be questioned."

Criminals prefer unarmed victims

Police presence is unlikely and not guaranteed at public meetings or hearings

Police Presence costs the municipality extra money in overtime.

Now to my experience as a City Councilor for Sanford since 2020.

Yes, things do get heated at times, and not always from citizens. I'm glad that anyone in that room could be armed, and it's a deterrent against someone coming in with a vendetta over a code violation or a traffic stop. The public is the best defense against mass shootings as it is unlikely that someone will even attempt knowing that they would be potentially stopped immediately.

As a City Councilor I exercise my rights and also concealed carry at any meeting at City Hall. Not only am I

responsible for my own safety, I am being a responsible citizen by providing that unknown deterrent. I will continue to do so despite the outcome of this bill. My life is worth more than a fine.

The state has a preemption for a reason so that rights are not being trampled by a patchwork of local ordinances.

I strongly urge you to vote ought not to pass as this will only cause more mass shootings and cause unnecessary expense and burden on local law enforcement.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Martell  
City Councilor, Sanford, ME