

5/1/2025

In support of LD 1743 An Act to Improve the Security of Voting Places

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and members of the Judiciary Committee

My name is Lynn Ellis and I live in Brunswick. The bill's sponsor is my Representative. I am pleased to support this legislation and her commitment to keeping my town and my state secure.

LD1743 would help prevent armed intimidation at the polling places where citizens go to do their civic duty and exercise their right to vote. Dangerous weapons intended to intimidate or harass in and around polling places are a real and imminent threat to free and fair elections in Maine and across the country. I urge this legislative body to empower localities to prohibit all such weapons in and around polling places and keep armed intimidation out of politics. Former Attorney General Merrick Garland said *"The Justice Department has an obligation to guarantee a free and fair vote by everyone who's qualified to vote and will not permit voters to be intimidated."*

Years ago, I helped organize a public event in the local park in Brunswick where we presented resources on safe firearm storage, suicide prevention resources and music and games for the children. About half a dozen individuals arrived to this family-focused event with their firearms clearly visible on their hips. As one of the organizers of the event, I was terrified. With so many children present and the ongoing trauma of mass shootings across our country every day I had no idea what to expect. What was the purpose of this show of weapons? Intimidation.

Make no mistake, the threats against election workers are a new and deeply disturbing trend in American elections and requires innovative thinking with one example being this bill. You have heard testimony today from individuals with personal stories of having been threatened at town council meetings and other municipal gatherings.

Eighteen other states permit municipalities to prohibit or limit the possession of firearms in municipal buildings and during municipal proceedings. I hope we can add Maine to this list.

Please support the passage of LD1743. We should not allow this type of dangerous intimidation to interfere with a cornerstone of our democracy.

Lynn Ellis

Brunswick