

"An Act to Allow Certain Persons with a Permit to Carry Concealed Handguns to Possess or Discharge a Firearm on School Property"

Sponsored by **Representative White**

Greetings to the committee.

I am here today in full support of a unanimous "Ought to Pass" for LD885.

It's high time we changed the Maine law that makes it illegal for adults to protect our children on school grounds. "Gun Free Zones" is one of the most counterproductive type of laws ever passed. Simply posting signs and wishing for the best does not work.

It's time to face the reality that sociopaths and lunatics with evil in their hearts and minds will never, ever follow the rules or laws of others. Once they have set a goal of inflicting harm or death on innocent people, the only thing that will immediately stop them is to meet them with equal or greater force.

To think that a sign on a door or window will stop them is at best delusional, at worst, continuing to support them is being complicit in the death and mayhem they invite. History has proven, time after time, after time, that unprotected GFZs do not provide any safety whatsoever.

Approximately thirty years ago this body made the promise to protect our children and up to today, it has remained just that, a promise. To merely declare a particular place or area as being "Gun Free" without taking measures to either enforce that or provide adequate protection to those people in that place or area does not fulfill that promise.

In the decades since, there has been much discussion about how to keep that promise which has resulted in very little actual, effective action. The most dominant discussions have been to ban certain types of guns or to attempt to restrict who can have guns.

As to banning so called "Assault Rifles", even if it happened it would not have any measurable effect on the murder rate in the US or safety of our children. As per the FBI, they are used in less than 300 murders annually of the over 14,000 committed. That is less than one percent and is also an argument by itself for another day. Also, there are approx. 30,000,000 of them already in

circulation and it would be a few more decades before they were all collected, even if that were possible. Guns are not going to just disappear or become illegal to possess anytime soon, probably not even in our lifetimes.

Regarding restrictions on who can possess firearms, that is a discussion that has been going on for decades and unless we can come up with a way to foresee the future of each individual human, will continue to go on for decades more.

Hardening our schools would take billions of dollars that right now aren't there and would take, again, decades to implement.

Hiring and training enough Law Enforcement to have them present in every school building in the state would also take years and massive amounts of money to get in place.

In the meantime, our children are still not adequately protected, and, in my opinion, those other discussions are distracting our minds and resources from doing anything meaningful to that end.

Federal law has always had an exception from the GFSZA for permit holders to carry on school grounds. Around 16 other states have always allowed it, and 38 states have some form of it for proactive protection.

This is the most economical way to protect our children, it costs the taxpayer absolutely nothing! It is also the simplest and fastest way to finally give our children and school staff the means they need to protect themselves.

There are over 800 school campuses in Maine and all of them currently have a sign on the door that basically says, "Please don't hurt me". Let's change those signs to say, "Staff may be Armed". That type of sign, all by itself, is a greater deterrent than any GFZ sign has ever been. Truthfully, even if not one person on campus is armed it still does more to deter a would-be shooter than the previous sign!

Most perpetrators of such heinous crimes are, more often than not, cowards. There are many published accounts of them searching out the most vulnerable, unprotected targets they can find. Let's take that advantage away from them!

There have been many reports of teachers putting themselves between the shooter and the children. While that is a noble, valiant gesture, it does not protect the students. The reality is that they're merely sacrificing themselves first. If the adult in the room is willing to do that, let's at least give them back the choice of actually being able to protect themselves and our children.

There are always going to be "what ifs", but history and many studies say that people with carry permits are overwhelmingly the politest, most law-abiding demographic in the US. Those studies were published by the Universities of Chicago and Harvard Law, the FBI and the CDC.

The rules of engagement for CCW holders are much higher than that of LEOs or security personnel which, I believe, also plays a major role in why they almost always have little or no collateral casualties when they do engage an active shooter. We also tend to train much, much more often with our carry firearms than the majority of LEOs.

I have heard the words "common-sense" many times when referencing gun laws. LD885 is actually one most common-sense laws proposed of late when talking about gun laws. Having the adults present prepared with the means to defend themselves should an incident occur would be one of the most common-sense, cost effective things we can do to immediately provide protection for our schools and children.

Again, I support an Ought to Pass vote for LD885.

Respectfully,

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