

Senator Deschambault, Representative Warren, and distinguished members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee,

Thank you for your attention to important public safety issues.

I am Chris Campbell, I live in Belfast, and I am a Professor emeritus at the University of Maine. I am testifying against LD1138, a stand your ground bill.

Title 17-A, section 104 of Maine's criminal code addresses the use of deadly force in defense of one's home or premises. This law follows a long-standing tradition sometimes called the "Castle doctrine". Under this law, when someone trespasses into your home, you are justified in using deadly force when you reasonably believe it is necessary to prevent arson or crime. Before using deadly force, you have to demand that the trespasser leave your house unless you reasonably believe that such a demand would be dangerous to you or others in your home.

Title 17-A, section 108 – subsection 2A justifies deadly force by a person when the person reasonably believes another person is about to use deadly force against the person or a 3rd person or about to commit a kidnapping, robbery, or gross sexual assault.

Section 108 - subsection 2C -3 specifies that a person is not justified in using deadly force as provided in subsection 2A if "The person knows that the person or a third person can, with complete safety: (a) retreat from the encounter, except that the person or the 3rd person is not required to retreat if the person or 3rd person is in the person's dwelling place and was not the initial aggressor."

Maine's laws clearly allow citizens to defend themselves with deadly force. In homes, retreat is not a viable option, but **Maine law encourages safe retreat outside the home, thereby reducing potential homicides.**

LD1138 adds a new subsection 4 that does not support retreat from encounters.

States with stand-your-ground laws have seen marked increases in homicides but not reduced occurrences of other crimes compared to states without the laws. Stand-your-ground laws have been far more deadly on people of color. Stand-your-ground laws are worrisome in Maine because they encourage unnecessary violence, there has been a recent surge in gun ownership, new gun owners are not required to be trained in the competent and safe use of guns, and Maine allows concealed carry.

Let's stand our ground and vote against the stand-your-ground bill LD1138.