

April 26, 2021

Testimony in Opposition to

LD 1138 An Act to Ensure the Right to Self-defense Exists outside the Home

by Removing the Requirement to Retreat

Senator Deschambault, Representative Warren and Members of the Criminal Justice & Public Safety Committee. My name is Lynn Ellis from Brunswick and I ask you to oppose LD 1138. As a gun safety advocate and a person dedicated to finding ways to save lives in the ever growing epidemic of gun violence in our state and in our country I believe this bill would dangerously increase the number of deaths and injuries in our state. As evidenced in other states with Stand Your Ground laws homicides have increased as have injuries requiring ER visits and hospitalizations.

Most troubling to me is the increased chance that firearms will be used to solve problems in a situation that could be handled in an alternate manner. I am a retired social worker and de-escalation methods often defuse a situation and no harm is done. However, there seems to be a growing trend where problems are solved using deadly force. Gun sales have skyrocketed during the Covid pandemic and indications are that they continue to be on the rise in 2021. Already a public health crisis gun violence continues to take lives in Maine and across the country.

Stand your Ground laws give people a license to kill with immunity. With tensions already escalated as we live with economic and social challenges in this time of uncertainty, adding a law that gives people a means to do lethal harm is not only unwarranted but dangerous. Stand Your Ground laws, are inherently dangerous because they change the nature of gun violence in a state by encouraging escalations of violence, and according to research, do nothing to deter overall crime.

I was born and raised in central Maine. We didn't always get along with our neighbors but I don't remember a time when we were so ready to use firearms to resolve our differences. I ask this committee to oppose passage of LD 1138.