

April 26, 2021

Senator Deschambault, Representative Warren, and members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide 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."

My name is Judith Feinstein, I am a semi-retired public health professional, and I live in Hallowell. I want to express my sincere and strong opposition to LD 1138. There is no need for it. LD 1138 effectively creates a "Stand Your Ground" law or defense for the use of deadly force in Maine, but under current law, people can already use force, including deadly force, to defend themselves anywhere, except that the law says that in public settings, they cannot use force likely to seriously injure or kill someone if there is a clear way to leave the situation with complete safety. It seems to me that the existing language already recognizes that situations could arise where a person might recognize a need to defend themselves – in self-defense.

LD 1138, as a "Stand Your Ground" law, sets the stage for people to react first and think later – that is, to shoot first and ask questions later. More Mainers will be killed unnecessarily, and many of them could be simply "caught in the crossfire" – innocently in the wrong place at the wrong time. We have seen this happen, and when it does, people's lives – the survivors' lives – are forever and tragically changed. My understanding is that Stand Your Ground laws do not discourage crime, but rather they increase homicide rates, firearm injuries, and financially burden taxpayers, families, and communities. As a public health professional, and as a 40-year resident of Maine, this is not what I want to see for my community or my state.

Please oppose LD 1138. Thank you for your consideration.