

William Harwood  
Yarmouth

To: Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee

I urge the Committee to vote against LD 1138.

Responding to a potentially violent altercation with "deadly force" should be a last resort. Those involved should make every reasonable effort to remove themselves from the altercation, if possible, before using deadly force.

The law of self defense in criminal cases has been the subject of centuries of careful and thoughtful debate and judicial rulings. This Committee should be hesitant to make major changes to such an important legal doctrine without significant research and input from experts in criminal justice.

Finally, our law enforcement officers should be the ones who decide whether deadly force is justified in a specific situation. Even with extensive training, law enforcement officials struggle to get this right. We should not assume that untrained gun owners are capable of correctly making these difficult split second decisions.

Thank you for your consideration.