

Testimony before the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee, April 26, 2021

Senator Deschambault, Representative Warren, and distinguished members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee, my name is Sandra Lovell and have lived in Portland for 44 years.

I love my community; I love my neighborhood.... and I love this state.

I am here to testify against **LD 1138** not because I like testifying and not because I know all the facts and figures and research about stand your ground laws.

I am here simply as a citizen who is deeply troubled by the escalating gun violence in this country. As uncomfortable as it is to be here today, I needed to add my voice.

In trying to prepare this testimony, I scanned the wealth of available research and it seemed pretty conclusive that stand your ground laws like LD 1138 do NOT deter crime.

According to Gifford's Law Center, Florida's stand your ground law had the largest negative impact on neighborhoods that initially had the lowest homicide rates before the law was enacted. I have to ask myself, would my safe, friendly neighborhood be transformed?

Two years ago, my sweet 6 year-old granddaughter had an "active shooter" drill at her neighborhood elementary school. It wasn't called that, of course. That would be too scary. Instead, the children were told that there was a rabid animal outside and they had to lock the building.

For weeks after this happened, my well-adjusted first grader was anxious to be outside...afraid there was some animal that could harm her. Imagine the impact on her if there had been talk of guns? Or, what if she and her younger brother grew up knowing there was a neighbor on the street who had a gun and was allowed to shoot it.

THIS is NOT the kind of world I want my grandchildren living in. This is not the kind of world I want to live in. I don't want to live in a state or community where my neighbors or fellow Mainers are armed vigilantes. I don't want to live in an armed vigilante culture.

This particular bill goes against everything I believe in.

Maine does NOT need this bill. It is not who we are...nor is it who we want to be.

Maine, the way life should be. Please, let's keep it that way. I ask you to vote to not pass LD 1138.

Thank you for your attention today.

Respectfully submitted,
Sandra Lovell