

# Maine Chapter

INCORPORATED IN MAINE

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®



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Honorable Senator Deschambault, Representative Warren and Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety,

My name is Genevieve Whiting, MD. I am a resident of Cape Elizabeth and a Pediatrician in Westbrook. I serve as the Secretary for the Maine Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (Maine AAP).

I am writing on behalf of the Maine AAP in opposition to LD 1138, An Act to Ensure the Right to Self-defense exists outside of the Home by Removing the Requirement to Retreat.

As medical professionals, we bear witness to the results of gun violence. We see the physical and psychological damage caused to individuals and their families as a result of gun violence. Therefore, we advocate strongly for avoiding violence whenever possible. In contrast, this law seeks to elevate the use of deadly force even when avoidance, via retreat, is possible.

Laws similar to this, often called 'Stand Your Ground' laws, have been enacted across the country and the result has been devastating. As a result of such laws, 30-50 people are killed in the US each month and there are additional injuries resulting in emergency room visits and inpatient stays.

Rather than acting as a deterrent to crime, such laws are associated with an 8% increase in firearm homicides. Furthermore, such laws have the capacity to further racial inequities. Often, the race of the attacker and victim factor significantly in whether an attack is deemed justifiable. That determination is only made after deadly or debilitating force has been used.

Our criminal justice system requires a burden of proof for conviction and conviction before sentencing. This law seeks to empower individuals to be jury, judge and executioner.

On behalf of all Mainers and the medical community, we hope you will see the dangers inherent in this law. Protect the lives of Mainers by opposing LD 1138.