

Maine gun safety COALITION

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Senator Deschambault, Representative Warren, and the distinguished members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee, my name is Geoff Bickford and I come before you today on behalf of the Maine gun safety coalition our board of directors and our thousands of supports in strong support of LDs 976 and 1454.

Having been doing this work for a few years now, I am not unfamiliar with the refrain from opponents of commonsense, life saving gun safety legislation, that we already have laws on the books, and we just need to enforce them better.

Well, when it comes to non-serialized, untraceable, make-at-home guns that evade background checks, and in the case of 3D printed guns, can evade even metal detectors, we don't have that law. We need that law, and then, I agree, let's enforce it.

Much like the LD 999, Darien's law, which would close the dangerous background check loopholes in this state that allow felons, domestic abusers, and other prohibited people to purchase a gun in Maine, LD 1454 is about keeping guns out of the hands of those who shouldn't have them. Another frequent refrain from gun safety opponents is "well, criminals are always going to get guns." Yes, and this is how they get them!

You see, if you can't pass a background check, or you want to commit a crime with a gun and make sure that gun can't be traced back to you through serial numbers that all guns have required since 1968, then you might oppose this law.

3D printed guns and ghost guns provide an avenue for prohibited persons to make a fully functioning gun at home, and to then use it or sell it. 3D guns are printed at home by downloading the necessary computer codes, and hitting print on your \$200 3D printer. Not only do 3D guns lack a serial number, and by printing them at home they are made avoiding a background check, but because they are constructed out of plastic resins, they won't set off a metal detector.

Ghost guns, or kit guns, or 80% guns are, when finished, indistinguishable from something you'd buy at your local gun store. Until someone commits a crime with one, in which case the lack of a serial number will make solving that case nearly impossible. And if you were to buy that gun at a gun store, you'd need a background check to ensure that violent felons and domestic abusers aren't

obtaining guns. So yes, let's make the law, and let's enforce it. Let's make sure criminals don't get guns.

Turning quickly to bump stocks, I'm certain you are well aware of the carnage these devices can and have wrought. The deadliest mass shooting in US history in Las Vegas, where 58 concert goers were shot dead and hundreds more injured in mere minutes, was only possible because the shooter used a bump stock, allowing him to replicate the rate of fire achievable with a fully automatic rifle, even though he was using guns that were perfectly legal to own. It's why President Trump directed the ATF to ban these devices, which they wisely, and properly did. So why do we need this law in Maine? Two big reasons. 1. As an executive action, and not a law, the ATF's ruling can be overturned at any time by a subsequent administration, or the courts. We need LD 976 to be law as a backstop to make sure that if that ever happens, bump stocks will still remain illegal in Maine. And, 2, currently only federal prosecutors have jurisdiction over bump stock possession cases. Enacting LD 976 will give Maine prosecutors the ability to prosecute those cases if they elect, and especially if they result from a state or local investigation.

I urge you to vote on these critically important bills to keep Mainers safe. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Geoff Bickford
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