



Cathy Breen
Senator, District 25

THE MAINE SENATE

3 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

**Testimony introducing
LD 976, An Act To Amend the Definition of "Machine Gun" To Include Bump Stock
Devices
Senator Cathy Breen
May 3, 2021**

Senator Deschambault, Representative Warren, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety, my name is Cathy Breen. I represent Maine Senate District 25, which includes the communities of Chebeague Island, Cumberland, Falmouth, Gray, Long Island, Yarmouth, and about half of the City of Westbrook. I am here to introduce **LD 976, An Act To Amend the Definition of "Machine Gun" To Include Bump Stock Devices.**

This bill would redefine any gun outfitted with a bump stock as a machine gun, ownership of which is a Class D crime. These add-ons are unnecessary and only increase the lethality of semiautomatic weapons. Their only purpose is to help those who would kill others do so faster.

According to the New York Times,

a "bump stock" replaces a rifle's standard stock, which is the part held against the shoulder. It frees the weapon to slide back and forth rapidly, harnessing the energy from the kickback shooters feel when the weapon fires. The stock "bumps" back and forth between the shooter's shoulder and trigger finger, causing the rifle to rapidly fire again and again. The shooter holds his or her trigger finger in place, while maintaining forward pressure on the barrel and backward pressure on the pistol grip while firing.

The use of these devices can allow a semiautomatic rifle to fire 100 rounds in seven seconds.¹ Federal law currently bans bump stocks, resulting from the 2017 mass murder in Las Vegas that left 58 Americans dead. The murderer used bump stocks in order to increase his efficiency, allowing fewer people on the street below to find cover before being shot. The law is being aggressively challenged in federal court, however;

¹ Aaron C. Davis, Beth Reinhard and Sari Horwitz, "The ATF-approved 'goofy little doodad' used by Las Vegas gunman Stephen Paddock," *Washington Post*, October 4, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/investigations/the-goofy-little-doodad-approved-under-obama-that-was-used-in-las-vegas-carnage/2017/10/04/3a1a2104-a935-11e7-850e-2bdd1236be5d_story.html

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit has said that it will be able to prove that the ban is unlawful.² This makes passing LD 976 all the more important.

In my time in the Legislature, I have introduced bills to regulate the ownership and brandishment of firearms and have testified on many more. Good people on the other side of the debate often argue that Maine is a safe state and the gun owners here are responsible folks who don't need government interference. I have no doubt this is true for the overwhelming majority of Maine's sportsmen. But I have yet to hear a compelling argument for why a device that simply allows a shooter to spray bullets at a vastly increased rate should be acceptable and legal in our society.

Please support this bill to protect Mainers from automatic weapons. Thank you, and I am happy to take any questions.

² Brian Flood, "Federal Bump Stock Ban Blocked by Divided Appeals Court," *Bloomberg Law*, March 25, 2021, <https://news.bloomberglaw.com/us-law-week/federal-bump-stock-ban-blocked-by-divided-appeals-court>