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Testimony in support of LD 976, An Act To Amend the Definition of “Machine Gun” To Include Bump Stock Devices.

Honorable Senator Deschambault, Representative Warren and Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety, I am a Portland resident (District 5), a pediatrician, a member of the Board of Directors of the Maine Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, and a concerned citizen.

For nearly a century, manufacturers and gun users have developed accessories to transform semi-automatic weapons into “machine guns”. Bump stocks do just that. The impact of using bump stocks are not theoretical. The 2017 tragedy in Las Vegas resulted in the death of many people and was directly related bump stocks. Stephen Paddock utilized bump stocks to murder 60 people, wound 411 others due to gunfire, and injure 396 individuals as they fled the scene. Mr. Paddock’s bump stocks allowed him to fire over 1,000 rounds in less than 10 minutes.

There is no doubt that the addition of a bump stock to a semi-automatic firearm converts the semi-automatic firearm into a “machine gun”. A machine gun was defined by the National Firearms Act of 1934 as a weapon that “shoots, is designed to shoot, or can be readily restored to shoot automatically more than one shot without manually reloading, by a single function of the trigger.”

Some gun enthusiasts want legislators to believe that firearms equipped with bump stocks do not meet the definition of “machine guns”. The practical experience for the shooter argues otherwise since the gun operator fires many rounds with a single trigger pull. Therefore, guns equipped with bump stocks met the “machine guns” definition, despite attempts to skirt this definition on a technicality.

Others, who oppose LD 976, insist that federal law makes this bill duplicative. However, repeated District Court challenges throughout the United States place the federal law at risk.

Maine cannot wait for a tragedy, like the one in Las Vegas, to pass gun safety and violence reforms. **Please support LD 976 and recognize that a bump stock does convert a semi-automatic firearm into a “machine gun”.**

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