

Testimony of Maura Pillsbury in Support of LD 1454

An Act To Prohibit Untraceable and Undetectable Firearms, Sponsored by Rep. Sam Zager

Senator Deschambault, Representative Warren, and members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee, my name is Maura Pillsbury. I am a resident of Freeport and I am here today to testify on behalf of myself and thousands of members of Moms Demand Action Maine across the state in strong support of LD 1454.

As a mother of two young children and a local elected official, I have watched with growing concern as gun violence has escalated in Maine and around the country. Gaps in federal law that allow the manufacture, sale and possession of untraceable guns, which lack a serial number and can be purchased without a background check, make it easy for prohibited purchasers to evade state and federal laws and access firearms that they cannot legally possess and that cannot be traced by law enforcement.

President Biden recently called for action to address this issue at the federal level through executive action, directing the Department of Justice to revise rules that have allowed the market for ghost guns to flourish. However, it will take time for federal rule changes to take effect and those changes may well be subject to legal challenges, further delaying their enforcement. This bill is an opportunity for Maine to take action now by passing a strong state law that addresses the rising threat of ghost guns and ensures these dangerous weapons don't threaten the safety of our communities.

Rhode Island is a leader on this issue and last year joined the ranks of several states that have enacted a law prohibiting ghost guns. This came after Rhode Island law enforcement officials seized 11 ghost guns that were specifically manufactured for sale to people prohibited from owning firearms as convicted felons¹; and a woman in Pawtucket was shot and killed with a ghost gun that had a polymer frame and no serial numbers.²

This bill would prohibit the manufacture, possession, assembly, import, sale or transfer of untraceable and undetectable firearms in Maine. These are guns that are either downloadable online and can be made at home, including some all-plastic guns that are not able to be detected by metal detectors, or most importantly assembled using an unfinished frame or receiver. These unfinished frames and

¹Mark Pratt, "Governor signs law banning 3D-printed weapons, 'ghost guns' " *AP News*, June 3, 2020
<https://apnews.com/article/88abde447edfb01df1879845cab05042>

²Rachel Nunes, "Pawtucket Shooting Mystery: Was Gun 3D-Printed?" *Patch*, Jan 13, 2020,
<https://patch.com/rhode-island/cranston/pawtucket-shooting-mystery-was-gun-3d-printed>

receivers—sometimes referred to as “80 Percent” frames or receivers—don’t have to be serialized and can be sold without a background check. Convicted felons, violent domestic abusers, and other people who are legally prohibited from purchasing firearms can avoid a background check and access guns by buying unfinished frames and receivers and other parts and kits available online that easily enable them to finish the frames or receivers and convert them into functional firearms. Guns built from unfinished frames and receivers or using 3-D printing technology are especially appealing to perpetrators of gun crimes. Because these DIY guns have no serial numbers, they cannot be traced by law enforcement. If these guns are used to commit a crime and recovered at the scene, it cannot be identified or traced to its point of origin, depriving law enforcement officers of a vital lead to identifying the perpetrator.

I urge you to support LD 1454 to protect Mainers from ghost guns. Thank you.