



Maine Municipal
Association

60 COMMUNITY DRIVE
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04330-9486
(207) 623-8428
www.memun.org

Maine Municipal Association

Testimony in Opposition to

LD 1179- *An Act To Restrict Maine Law Enforcement Participation in Federal Firearm Confiscation or Buy-back Programs without Legislative Approval*

May 05, 2021

Senator Deschambault, Representative Warren, and distinguished members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee, my name is Rebecca Graham, and I am testifying in opposition to LD 1179 as directed by MMA's 70 member Legislative Policy Committee.

The State of Maine does not fund municipal police services. Those services, and their enforcement priorities, are shaped directly by the residents that pay for those services.

Municipal police must take a deliberative approach to participating in such federal programs as they require extensive administration time and storage space that many local facilities do not have available. A municipality may choose this option to avoid mishandling of firearms or divert the costs of disposal for weapons turned into the department by members of the community.

Often, responsible citizens turn in weapons to the municipal police because they are cleaning out the residence of a deceased relative and do not wish to keep them or cannot for a variety of reasons. These individuals often chose this path to ensure weapons are not misused in the future and feel the participation in a federal program that assists their police department is an additional benefit. It strikes officials as odd that how a municipal police department chooses to dispense of that property, legally and responsibly, under an approved federal program falls under the purview of both houses of the legislature and the governor.

As drafted, LD 1179 sets a dangerous precedent of overstepping municipal authority to participate in federal programs that provide a tangible benefit for municipal police departments and taxpayers. This is additionally concerning because it is this body that is all too comfortable with passing unfunded mandates on to those same communities. Requiring legislative review for one level of government to seek permission to engage in another level of government's programming is disrespecting the constitutional provision of home rule and voter will. Concerns this body has regarding participation in such programs should be directed to the federal delegates, or the program itself, not forced on communities who do not share their view.

The municipal voters who directly pay for the services and elect local officials should have the only say in what federal programs their police engage with. For these reasons, municipal officials as you to vote ought not pass on LD 1179, or exclude municipal police entirely from its application.