

UPDATED TESTIMONY OF MICHAEL KEBEDE, ESQ.

Neither For nor Against

**LD 168, An Act Regarding Criminal Background Checks for the Sale,
Transfer or Exchange of Firearms As Amended**

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON
CRIMINAL JUSTICE & PUBLIC SAFETY

April 4, 2023

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Salisbury, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice & Public Safety, greetings. My name is Michael Kebede, and I am the Policy Counsel at the ACLU of Maine, a statewide organization committed to advancing and preserving civil rights and civil liberties guaranteed by the Maine and U.S. Constitutions.

Yesterday, the ACLU of Maine submitted testimony against LD 168 and two other bills that used criminal penalties as enforcement mechanisms for gun control measures. In that testimony we stated that “If these bills were amended to remove criminal penalties as the enforcement mechanism, we would remove our opposition.” We understand that the bill sponsor, Speaker Talbot Ross, has amended LD 168 to remove criminal penalties as the enforcement mechanism. Accordingly, we withdraw our opposition to LD 168 as amended.

We thank Speaker Talbot Ross for making this amendment, and urge other legislators to similarly try to solve social problems without resort to criminal penalties.