

Martin Malia
Westbrook
LD 168

I am writing to express my opposition to LD 168. An act regarding criminal background checks for the sale, transfer or exchange of firearms. The right to keep and bear arms for self defense is a natural right guaranteed by the Bill of Rights in the U.S. Constitution and the Maine State Constitution. LD 168 would require individuals to utilize a federally licensed firearm dealer to facilitate a transfer for a private firearm sale. Most federally licensed firearm dealers naturally charge a fee for their time to complete the background check on private sales. The fee is usually between \$20 to \$50 but it could be higher. The text of LD 168 allows for "a reasonable fee" to be charged but it does not define what is reasonable. Since LD 168 deals with access to a civil right, can any fee be considered reasonable? Is there any other civil right that requires an individual to first pay a fee before they can exercise their right? Can an individual be charged a \$20 to \$50 fee before they are allowed to vote? These fees are a financial barrier that would disproportionately impact low income individuals trying to exercise their civil rights.

As the Supreme Court of the United States recently noted in it's majority decision in the case of New York State Rifle & Pistol Association vs Bruen "The constitutional right to bear arms in public for self defense is not a second-class right, subject to an entirely different body of rules than the other Bill of Rights guarantees." Ld 168 would treat the right to keep and bear arms differently than other civil rights such as voting by imposing fees on access and ought not to pass.