

Janet Lynch
Pownal
LD 1340

From: Janet Lynch, Pownal, representing myself

Date of hearing: 8 May 2023

Re: LD 1340 - "An Act to Prohibit the Sale or Possession of Rapid-fire Modification Devices"

Dear Senator Beebe-Center, Rep. Salisbury, and members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee,

I strongly support LD 1340 - "An Act to Prohibit the Sale or Possession of Rapid-fire Modification Devices." This urgently needed bill OUGHT TO PASS.

Almost daily, the nation has been reeling from horrific multiple murders committed with automatic and semi-automatic weapons which can fire up to 1200 rounds a minute, or 15 rounds or more per second. To put this into context, in Maine, hunters are PROHIBITED from using weapons that fire over 6 rounds, and for duck hunters, you may not have more than 3 shells. The devices prohibited by this bill are used to create weapons whose sole purpose is mass killing.

Some have argued that they enjoy using high capacity automatic and semi-automatic weapons in competitions, but the rights of some to enjoy an inherently dangerous pastime do not outweigh the threat to public safety posed by such weapons. I note that in 2008, the Supreme Court ruled that dangerous weapons which are not in common use may be banned.

The aim of this bill is to ensure that such extremely dangerous weapons stay OUT of common use by banning devices used to create them. Almost daily, sickening reports of mass shootings which turn peaceful public spaces (shopping malls, concerts, schools, churches, etc.) into grisly scenes of mass murder show that such weapons are becoming increasingly common, with deadly results. This much-needed bill aims to curb that trend by banning devices used to evade the law to create high capacity weapons of war, helping law enforcement protect the public from such weapons.

Some argue against any bill which limits the types of firearms which may be legally used, citing federal and state constitutional protections of the right to bear arms, hewing to an absolutist objection to any limitation on firearms. Let me be clear: no legally protected right is completely unfettered. For example, the constitutional right to free speech is fundamental to a functioning democracy. Yet it is well established that, for obvious reasons of public safety, the right to free speech does not protect someone shouting "FIRE!" in a crowded theater. Moreover, devices used to modify firearms to increase their killing capacity are not firearms themselves, and there is no constitutional right to use after-market devices to increase the lethality of firearms.

Assault weapons and rapid fire devices are not allowed for hunting and have no place in our state. This bill aims to prohibit devices used to turn firearms into a high-capacity weapons of war, with the capacity to maim and kill staggering numbers of people in seconds. These devices are not themselves firearms but are used to increase the lethality of firearms. There is absolutely no reason for ANYONE to own such a device, and they should be banned.

I urge you to please vote, LD 1340 Ought to Pass.

Sincerely,
Janet Lynch, Pownal