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Testimony in Opposition to LD 1557: “An Act to Increase and Enhance School Safety by Allowing Individuals with Concealed Carry Permits to Possess Handguns on School Property.”

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and distinguished members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee, I am Dr. Dan Hale of Kittery, Maine and a Board Member for the Maine AAP.

As a father, pediatrician, and responsible firearm owner I support commonsense measures to prevent firearm violence. There is no “easy” unifying intervention that will end firearm violence, but there are several measures that can move us in the right direction of saving lives.

However, LD 1557 does not add value as an attempt to keep our schools safe.

I feel this bill should not pass because indiscriminate concealed handgun carry in schools will lead to accidental shootings. In addition, in an active shooter situation, an armed person may be at risk of being shot by responding police officers who cannot tell who the “good guy” is and who the “bad guy” is.

There is a long history of responsible firearm ownership in Maine. Families have been hunting and fishing together for centuries. The legislature should focus on measures that strengthen safety measures without causing potential inadvertent harm.

Thank you for keeping our communities safe,

Dan Hale, M.D.,FAAP, SFHM