



Testimony of the Maine Municipal Association

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

April 25, 2023

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and members of the Educational and Cultural Affairs Committee, my name is Rebecca Lambert, and I am providing testimony in opposition to LD 1557 on behalf of Maine Municipal Association's (MMA) elected 70-member Legislative Policy Committee (LPC). For reference, the LPC provides direction to the advocacy team at MMA and establishes the position on bills of municipal interest.

Local leaders are opposed to allowing concealed carry permittees to possess handguns on school property. With the increase of school shootings in recent years across the nation, they recognize why the discussion of allowing it arises time and time again. However, local officials fear that the authority provided in LD 1557 could lead to unintended consequences should an active shooter event occur.

Even if law enforcement were supplied with a list of every concealed carry permit holder, it would be nearly impossible to determine who had a firearm and who did not within a school during an event, where time is of the essence and action rather than research is necessary. Law enforcement responding to an active shooter event may not have this information at hand and could mistakenly shoot an innocent person trying to protect those involved, rather than the one with ill intent.

Having the ability to hire a contracted and trained student resource officer, typically employed by a law enforcement department and already allowable by current law, would be a more palatable way to provide additional safety in schools particularly in rural areas where response time is longer.

Furthermore, individuals come from a variety of backgrounds, some of whom find firearms unsettling or downright scary, and should not be subjected to that fear while working in a school or participating as a student.

Thank you for your time and for considering the municipal perspective on this issue.

