

Anna Mead
Portland
LD 1557

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and distinguished members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee, my name is Anna Mead and I am a resident of Portland. I have a two and a half year old daughter who will start kindergarten in a few years, and I am also a nurse practitioner with a background in public health.

I oppose LD 52, LD 518, LD 1326 and LD 1557 because I want school to be a place where children like my daughter can focus on learning, not a place where they think adults must carry weapons in order to keep them safe. My background in public health also informs my opposition to these bills. In public health we often talk about different levels of prevention: primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention. Primary prevention aims to prevent disease or injury before it occurs; secondary prevention aims to reduce the impact of a disease or injury that has already occurred; and tertiary prevention aims to reduce the impact of an ongoing illness or injury that has long-lasting affects. Arming school personnel is a tertiary prevention measure; it does nothing to prevent gun violence from occurring, only mitigates potential damage from a mass shooter.

Rather than waiting until mass shootings occur and implementing tertiary prevention methods to mitigate damage, we should focus on primary and secondary prevention strategies to keep our children and schools safe. These strategies could include investing in school-based mental health professionals and resources, passing legislation that encourages secure storage of firearms, and banning assault-style weapons which are so often the weapons of choice for mass shooters.

Thank you.