

Dear Members of the Maine Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety:

My name is Janice Vance and I live in Kennebunk. I wanted to ask you to oppose LD 1138, the proposed Stand Your Ground bill. I have worked either full or part time for a half century. I have lived in three states, in multiple neighborhoods. I have traveled often for business, usually alone. And NEVER have I felt I needed to “defend myself” from someone who threatened me – to use the bill’s language -by “kidnapping, robbery or gross sexual assault.”

This is especially true in Maine, where we are told all the time – by certain members of our Legislature, in fact - that MAINE IS THE SAFEST STATE IN THE COUNTRY. In fact, every time legislation is proposed to require simple, common-sense regulations like universal background checks for gun purchases, locking up firearms to keep them away from children, or temporarily removing firearms from those who are at risk of suicide or domestic violence, we are informed – again, by certain Legislators - that there’s no need because MAINE IS THE SAFEST STATE IN THE COUNTRY. Has something changed recently? Does the author of this bill expect that we will begin routinely experiencing “kidnapping, robbery or gross sexual assault” and therefore each of us must be armed and hyper-vigilant each time we step outside to mow the lawn? Can he show us what statistics he is basing this belief on?

Statistics show\* that gun violence rates are higher in every single state that has a Stand Your Ground law, because it allows men suffering from Chip on The Shoulder Disorder an excuse to consciously look for confrontation. Stand Your Ground laws don’t make us safer. They increase our crime rates.

We really don’t need a law that allows people to shoot their annoying neighbor and get away with it by claiming they feared he was going to kidnap them.

Members of the Committee, please oppose this ridiculous bill. Thank you for your time.

\*<https://everytownresearch.org/report/stand-your-ground-laws-are-a-license-to-kill/>

Janice Vance  
Moms Demand Action

Dear Senator Claxton, Rep. Meyer and members of the Committee on Health and Human Services, my name is Janice Vance and I live in Kennebunk. I am also a local volunteer with Moms Demand Action. I wanted to thank you for proposing LD 1392, which directs the state CDC to gather and release annual data regarding firearm deaths and injuries. While we do see news reports about the kinds of tragedies that make compelling headlines – child shootings, domestic homicide, etc – we never, ever see a full accounting of the number of deaths and injuries that result from gun violence.

Gun violence is a public health crisis across the country. Like the opioid crisis, it's a symptom of deeper societal problems. But without research and data to tell us how bad the problem is, we cannot create good policy to address it. And, when we don't track and publicize the numbers of Mainers killed or injured every year, it's easy for some people to pretend we don't have a problem.

We need data to understand how best to prevent suicide by gun, which we do know is higher in Maine than in other states. We need to know how to proactively prevent domestic violence, and keep children from finding loaded weapons. Police departments need to track officers' firearms use and assess their fitness for duty. We need to know the type of injuries being caused by firearms, with recognition that some are designed simply to kill the highest number of people in the shortest amount of time.

We all know how seriously visitors to Maine take the phrase "Maine: The Way Life Should Be." Let's ensure we put action behind those words by making our state as safe and healthy as possible. Please pass LD 1392. Thank you for your time.