

John Lenotte  
Denmark  
LD 677

Dear Committee Members,

As a retired law enforcement officer (municipal, county & federal), I write to express my strong opposition to Maine's proposed bill LD 677, which seeks to redefine the meaning of "machine gun" in a manner inconsistent with federal law. As a career law enforcement officer, I understood the critical importance of clear, uniform legal definitions and the need to ensure that laws are consistent across state and federal jurisdictions. This bill, however, introduces unnecessary confusion and risks undermining both public safety and the constitutional rights of Maine residents.

Under federal law, the term "machine gun" is precisely defined in the National Firearms Act (NFA) and the Gun Control Act (GCA). These definitions are clear, enforceable, and widely recognized across the United States. By altering the definition of "machine gun" at the state level, LD 677 creates a dangerous divergence between Maine state law and federal law, leading to potential confusion and conflict in enforcement. Law enforcement officers rely on clear and uniform definitions of firearms to ensure that we can enforce laws effectively, and this bill undermines that consistency.

Moreover, such a redefinition would likely result in a situation where individuals in Maine could be in legal jeopardy for possessing firearms that are legally owned under federal law. The potential for confusion would disproportionately affect law-abiding gun owners who could unintentionally fall afoul of state law due to this divergence, all while doing little to actually address crime or improve public safety.

Federal law already provides a robust framework for regulating machine guns, and further complicating this issue at the state level is unnecessary. Maine's residents benefit from the protections and consistency provided by federal law. There is no compelling reason to introduce a patchwork of conflicting definitions and regulations that could only serve to confuse both citizens and law enforcement officers.

Additionally, the redefinition proposed in LD 677 would infringe upon the Second Amendment rights of Maine's law-abiding citizens. The right to bear arms, as enshrined in the U.S. Constitution, should not be unnecessarily restricted by overly broad or inconsistent definitions that could make it more difficult for responsible gun owners to understand and comply with the law.

As a law enforcement professional, my primary concern was ensuring the safety of our community while upholding the rule of law. This proposed bill, however, does not contribute to the protection of public safety. Instead, it risks creating unnecessary legal challenges and confusion. I urge lawmakers to reject LD 677 in favor of preserving the current, consistent federal definition of "machine gun" that maintains clarity and upholds the rights of Maine residents.

Sincerely,  
John Lenotte  
Retired ~ Officer/Agent  
US Department of Homeland Security