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LD 1109

I am David Norman, a registered Democrat and clinical social worker in practice in Cumberland County. I'm writing to address LD 1109, "An Act to Reduce Gun Violence Casualties in Maine by Prohibiting the Possession of Large-Capacity Ammunition Feeding Devices." I have an ethical duty to engage in political action as it pertains to protecting the best interests of my clients and community. This bill does not do that, and puts them in both legal and practical jeopardy. Further, this bill puts an undue burden on the LGBTQ+ and BIPOC communities, who are increasingly seeking both modern firearms and modern firearm training to provide practical security and real peace of mind in times which many currently find troubling. Harm to these communities in particular should never be tolerated, much less promoted, by my fellow Democrats or any politician.

I urge you to not pass this bill.

LD 1109 puts my clients, friends, family, and colleagues in many communities, in legal jeopardy.

This bill would require a compliant retrofit of standard capacity magazines into versions which contain fewer rounds than they were designed to hold, with a severe penalty for non-compliance even for those lay community people to whom this esoteric change is difficult to understand and harder still to comply with. Thinking particularly of my friends, family members, and colleagues in the LGBTQ+ and BIPOC communities who have come only lately into firearm ownership and firearm safety training, this law would change the legal landscape around them at a time when they are focusing on learning firearm safety rather than esoteric details of magazine function and legal compliance. They, as all of us, have plenty more important things to focus their time and energy on than staying compliant with a law which makes little practical sense...and the penalties outlined in this bill for even accidental non-compliance are substantial.

LD 1109 misidentifies standard capacity magazines, erroneously referring to magazines in common use for decades as "Large-Capacity Ammunition Feeding Devices." These standard capacity magazines, which firearms ship with standard from the factory, contain between 11 and 30 rounds of ammunition, with the average modern semi-automatic handgun designed to hold on average 15 rounds of ammunition. Modern sporting and defensive rifles often use 30 round magazines which have been in common use now for over forty years.

The proposed change to 10 rounds, and the proposed implementation of this law, means that magazines in common use for decades would have to be permanently altered via means not readily accessible to many newer firearm owners; indeed, coming into compliance would require either the substantial expense of replacing all of the magazines one may own with compliant models, or the very specific and unnecessarily burdensome job of individually modifying each magazine into compliance with the penalties for getting it wrong including arrest, fines, jail time, and subsequent loss of liberty and likely of employment.

This is too large of a risk to place on the firearm owners of our great state, particularly the newest firearm owners, and especially when many are already members of marginalized classes. We should not be creating laws which turn law-abiding citizens into criminals because esoteric aspects of the legal landscape change around them—regardless of what communities they belong to.

LD 1109 also puts our community members, including those in the most marginalized and at-risk communities who take it upon themselves to become lawfully armed and properly trained in firearm safety, at an unnecessary practical disadvantage. While this bill would be costly and burdensome to competitors, firearm collectors, historic item collectors, and others, it could have unintended tragic consequences for those who find they must use their firearm in the defense of their life or the lives of their

children or other family members. By prohibiting owners of common defensive arms from operating those arms with the standard capacity magazines intended by their designers, the Legislature deprives our citizenry of the practical means to protect themselves in the manner specifically intended by the product engineers.

A citizen who finds that they need all ten allowed rounds in a self-defense situation, is likely also in a position to benefit greatly from having the other five, or seven, or more, rounds intended to be in that standard capacity magazine. Removing those rounds by law does not benefit our citizenry in those low-frequency, high-impact moments where deploying a defensive firearm is the last means remaining to ensure the defense of life. Given that our more marginalized community members are at elevated risk of finding themselves the victims of targeted violence, this bill would have a disproportionate impact on those who are already facing enough disproportionate impacts.

I implore you to look after the citizenry of our state—of all communities, and especially the more marginalized—and protect them from legal jeopardy and from losing a defensive edge that could mean the difference between survival and death. Please defeat this bill and stand against future iterations of legislation that seek to limit law-abiding citizens' access to the best means of providing for their personal defense.