

I am a former law enforcement officer, firearms instructor, current Federal Firearms Licensee (FFL), gunsmith and small business owner in Greenbush, Maine. I am writing in opposition to LD 1821.

LD 1821 is misleadingly titled "An Act to Ensure Responsible Business Practices by Licensed Firearms Dealers". The correct title should be "An Act to Create State Licensing for Firearm Dealers".

This bill seeks to create a state level mandate with nearly identical responsibilities and licensing authority as the federal ATF. The wording for records keeping is nearly a direct copy. This would create an unnecessary secondary, and potentially conflicting licensing authority over firearm retailers.

Specifically, the video surveillance requirement for interior, exterior and point of sale monitoring with 24/7 recording retention for two years would require significant hardware costs which would be out of reach for most small retailers. There are no other industries which require this length of video retention and no justification other than to make the compliance costs so unaffordable it will put the retailers out of business.

The security system requirements would create an undue burden on small businesses, which make up the largest percentage of firearm retailers in the state. The poorly defined section on alarm systems, including such things "partial motion and sound detection" would require major systems outside the price range of more retailers. Industry standards and ATF regulations already provide the appropriate level of security based on individual shop needs.

Creating new data and document retention practices on top of the ATF requirements creates an undue burden and serves no public safety or law enforcement purpose except to create a lawfare trap for retailers who don't have every copy, every new form, or every other requirement of the additional extraneous regulations completed in time.

Additional inspections from the state, on top of the inspections from the ATF, is a duplication of effort and waste of resources. The State of Maine cannot alter federal firearm law, rules or regulations and therefore would only be able to inspect the additional administrative requirements now demanded from the state.

The requirement for posting warnings and signs is nothing more than a feel-good gesture on the part of the state. I can attest from my time working in firearm retail in California, where NUMEROUS signs of a specific size, color, font, font size and wording, along with various pamphlets and information sheets are mandated, none of it is read nor does it influence customers when they make a firearm purchase. It only adds costs for the retailer, passed on to the customer. It does however allow the state to punish the retailer and suspend their license if they are not in exacting compliance.

Mandatory training adds another layer of expenses for an undefined and open-ended set of topics to be developed by the state without regard for industry standard practices. Prohibiting a retailer from making transactions if their initial or ongoing training is not up to date implies a certification and licensing program, along with additional fees for the retailer, and significant costs of administration for the state.

This bill proposes a wide range of regulations which provide no public safety benefit to Maine. It will only force undue economic burdens on the retailers, putting them out of business. This will restrict the number of available options for Maine residents, increasing prices and requiring residents travel significant distances to one of the few major retailers who is able to absorb the costs associated with this bill.

I started in the firearm business in California in 2012. California is well known as being openly hostile to the firearm industry as well as individual right to keep and bear arms. Despite being the gold standard for gun control in the nation and earning the highest marks from every gun control organization, crime and violence in the state continue to spiral out of control. This bill contains the same elements currently used in California's state licensing system yet has never done anything to reduce crime or violence.

Maine is consistently ranked as the safest state in the nation, not in spite of the lack of gun control laws, but because of it. Maine has a high ownership rate for firearms and Mainers are free to purchase, carry and utilize firearms for hunting, sport and protection with minimal state interference. Enacting this bill would do absolutely nothing to increase public safety State of Maine.

Maine does not have an out-of-control problem with firearm retailers which would require such draconian government oversight. I suggest you take the time to visit the firearm retailers in your area and ask them questions yourself. You will see the industry is far better prepared and doing business in a safe and professional manner.

I urge you to vote against this proposal.