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Fairfield  
LD 1463

Letter in Opposition to LD 1463

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Chair Carney, Chair Kuhn, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary:

I am writing to express my strong opposition to LD 1463. I believe that this proposed legislation is not in the best interest of our state, county, municipalities, and the citizens of the state of Maine. This bill prohibits the State from offering surplus or forfeited firearms for private or public sale and requires all surplus and forfeited firearms to be destroyed except for firearms that were assigned to a state employee as a part of the employee's official duties, which may be purchased by that employee upon leaving employment.

LD 1463 is an unfunded mandate that only serves to raise taxes - in this case the most regressive form of taxation - property taxes. This is a fundamental concern that bears the cost of disposal directly on the tax paying citizen. By passing this bill, it would disallow law enforcement agencies the opportunity to auction or sell these firearms through or to licensed FFL auctioneers or dealers and in turn use the money to go toward the purchase needed equipment while offsetting the tax burden.

The bill fails to provide sufficient evidence that these firearms end up back in the hands of criminals, rather than the hands of law-abiding citizens. LD 1463 proposes sentencing firearms to death rather than focusing on what needs to happen. This is not a spade and neuter situation. We should be properly prosecuting to the letter of the law and setting punishments that keep the criminals that commit them off the street or properly rehabilitated instead of prosecuting and sentencing the firearms they use.

Let's focus on putting laws into place that deal with the real problems, such as a broken mental health system, an underfunded judicial system, and an overtaxed correctional system that bears the burden of expense without just compensation placing the taxpayer on the hook for the cost of destroying firearms.

In conclusion, the amendment to the current law does not address the real issues. I believe the current law should stand as is without amendment. I urge you to vote ought not to pass on LD 1463. Our community deserves legislation that reflects our values and prioritizes the needs of all its members.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,