

John Andrews
Maine Legislature

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Chairman Baldacci, Representative Matlack and honorable members of the State and Local Government Committee. My name is John Andrews and I represent the towns of Buckfield, Hebron and Paris that make up District 73 in the foothills of western Maine. I am here to testify against LD 805 'An Act To Allow Municipalities To Prohibit Firearms at Voting Places' and urge you to kill it in Committee with a unanimous 'Ought Not to Pass'.

Not only is this a bad bill it's a dangerous bill. All Mainers were born with the natural right of self-defense. Natural rights are those most basic rights that are innate to humankind and do not need to depend upon a government to exist. Man created government to secure and protect these rights. They are the foundation of our civilization, our Republic and our Democracy. Thomas Paine explained in 'The Rights of Man' that,

'Man did not enter into society to become worse than he was before, nor to have fewer rights than he had before, but to have those rights better secured.'

This bill is an incremental attempt to strip away our right to keep and bear arms enshrined in the Second Amendment and Article 1:Section 16 of the Maine state constitution. This bill comes from extremely well-funded out of state anti-gun groups that seek to subvert our state pre-emption firearms laws to see if they can get away with it here. They want to destroy the way life should be to see if they can push this on a national level. As Maine goes, so goes the nation.

This bill would potentially make random Select Boards, Town Councils, and County Commissioners the arbiters of firearms policy in the state of Maine. This is not how we were intended to live. Because of this bill our state would become a patchwork of varying stringent gun laws that differ from town to town and county to county. We would become exactly like Massachusetts for local firearms laws where you could not drive through certain towns or counties if you are exercising your right to keep and bear arms. That is not how we were intended to live.

Speaking as a former Vice-Chair of a Select Board this bill scares me. LD 805 would politicize Select Boards, Town Councils, and County Commissioner offices and races even more so than they are already. That was never the intent of their scope of work. They need to be focused on paving roads, keeping mil rates stable and hiring county employees – not drafting and overseeing firearms policy. These political times are divisive enough we do not need to salt the Earth of municipal politics. There is a reason that there are no political parties involved in municipal races. LD 805 would violate the spirit of that and change it forever.

Our natural right to self-defense is protected by the United States Constitution and the Maine state constitution. We will not comply if this bill becomes law. This bill cannot usurp those natural rights safeguarded by our founding documents no matter how hard it tries. Do the right thing and please unanimously vote 'Ought not To Pass'.

Thank you for your time and dedication to public service.

Respectfully,

John Andrews
State Representative
District 73

