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Testimony of Representative Poppy Arford presenting LD 805, An Act To Allow Municipalities To Prohibit Firearms at Voting Places

Before the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government

Senator Baldacci, Representative Matlack and respected colleagues of the Committee on State and Local Government, I am Poppy Arford, and honored to represent the people of District 49 in Brunswick. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of [LD 805 An Act To Allow Municipalities To Prohibit Firearms at Voting Places](#)

My understanding is that [In Maine, people who are 21 or older may openly carry firearms in public](#), provided they are not otherwise prohibited from possessing a firearm. Maine law also allows anybody who is 21 or older to carry a concealed handgun without a permit, again if they are not otherwise prohibited from possessing a firearm. So, unless the polling place is in a school building, federal or state courthouse, or located in a state office building, as the law currently reads, firearms may be carried, openly or concealed, by anyone 21 or older at polling locations in Maine.

I have co-sponsored and support LD 805 as it acts to allow municipal officers the option of prohibiting this, the possession or display of firearms at polling locations on election day. I am supporting this bill as its action is fair and reasonable. It does not act to take firearms away from their owners, rather it simply requires that firearms be left at home or, if taken to the polls, be secured within a locked vehicle if located within 250 feet of the polling location.

This bill is fair and reasonable as it does not institute a statewide regulation on firearms at polling places, but rather allows each municipality to decide whether or not they want to allow guns at their polling locations. And it makes sense to allow municipal officers, and the communities they represent, to decide whether or not they want firearms at their polls.

I will close by sharing my experience on November 3rd, general election day 2020. I spent the day at the Brunswick polls. I was there from 7 am until 10 pm when the results were finally posted, and I learned that I would be the next District 49 State Representative. There had been significant discussion in the media about the possibility of violence, including gun violence, at the polls nationwide. However, I knew firearms were not allowed on school property and our

polling place was the Brunswick Junior High School. I felt safe. I also believed that the gun owners who came to vote would act responsibly and leave their guns at home or safely secured in locked vehicles. And they did.

Please vote "Ought to Pass" and allowing Municipal officers to decide for themselves what works best for their communities. Thank you for hearing my testimony. I am happy to answer questions.