

4/12/2021

State and Local Government Affairs Committee

RE: LD 805



Senator Baldacci and Representative Matlack and members of the State & Local Government Committee

My name is Lynn Ellis from Brunswick, Maine and I am a proud member of Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America. We are a grassroots movement of Americans fighting for public safety measures that can

protect people from gun violence. We know that gun violence is preventable, and we're committed to doing what it takes to keep families safe. As President Biden said recently "we have an epidemic of gun violence."

LD 805 would help prevent armed intimidation at the polling places where citizens go to do their civic duty and exercise their right to voting. Openly armed extremists in and around polling places are a real and imminent threat to free and fair elections in Maine and to a functioning democracy. We are calling on lawmakers to empower localities to prohibit guns in and around polling places and keep armed intimidation out of politics.

Each year we host an event to honor Haydia Pendleton, a young woman of color who was shot just weeks after performing at President Obama's second inauguration along with all survivors of gun violence, called Wear Orange. At this event, we bring awareness and education to communities across Maine about the importance of secure firearm storage and the toll of gun violence in our country. A couple years ago, about half a dozen individuals arrived to this family-focused event with their firearms clearly visible on their hips. As one of the organizers of the event, I was terrified. With so many children present and the ongoing trauma of mass shootings across our country every day I had no idea what to expect. What was the purpose of this show of weapons? Intimidation.

Please support the passage of LD 805 and keep firearms and armed intimidation away from our polling places. We should not allow this type of dangerous intimidation to interfere with a cornerstone of our democracy.