

NATIONAL RIFLE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

INSTITUTE FOR LEGISLATIVE ACTION

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NRA

April 12, 2021

Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Dear Senator Baldacci, Representative Matlack, and Honorable Members of the Committee:

I am writing to you regarding Legislative Document 805 (LD 805); an act to allow municipalities to prohibit the possession of firearms at polling places. On behalf of the National Rifle Association, I would like to express our strong opposition to this piece of legislation.

Currently, individuals can lawfully carry a firearm into a polling place that is not prohibited under state or federal law. As drafted, LD 805 allows municipalities to impose an almost total prohibition of possession of a firearm in a “voting place”. It effectively creates a gun-free zone not only in the actual “voting place”, but prohibits possession in every place, public or private, that comes within a 250-foot zone of the entrance. The exemption, allowing for an unloaded firearm if stored in a container in a locked vehicle, entraps law-abiding citizens who have a firearm locked in their home; those transporting firearms; or those passing through a right-of-way while lawfully carrying. This is an attack on the right to self-defense for Maine citizens and gun owners, and an attack on Maine’s current preemption law.

State firearms preemption was enacted by the Maine Legislature to avoid a confusing patchwork of firearm laws across the state. Without preemption, there would be a myriad of local firearm laws making compliance impossible for law-abiding gun owners. LD 805 would be the first step in eliminating Maine’s current firearms preemption law.

This legislation will not enhance public safety and it is silent on all weapons, except firearms. Gun free zones are created and enforced with nothing more than a sheet of paper, and have never stopped a criminal act. To the contrary, one might argue that these areas invite criminal activity rather than discouraging it.

On behalf of NRA’s thousands of members in Maine, we respectfully request your opposition to this legislation. Please feel free to contact me at 703-267-1243 if you questions or concerns. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Lauren E. LePage, Esq.
State Director
NRA-ILA