

Testimony of Maura Pillsbury In Support of LD 805
An Act To Allow Municipalities To Prohibit Firearms at Voting Places
Sponsored by Senator Catherine Breen

Senator Baldacci, Representative Matlack, and members of the Committee on State and Local Government, my name is Maura Pillsbury and I am a volunteer with Moms Demand Action Maine. I am also a local elected official. I am submitting this testimony on my own behalf in support of LD 805. Armed voter intimidation has no place at the polls in Maine or anywhere else. It can disenfranchise voters and prevent them from accessing one of our most fundamental democratic rights. You may think armed intimidation of people seeking to exercise their constitutional rights does not happen or cannot happen in Maine. But I can tell you it has happened multiple times to me. I have been subjected to armed intimidation when exercising my first amendment right, along with others, to peaceably assemble. While at a rally in support of gun reform in Portland and again while attending a candlelight vigil in remembrance of gun violence victims in Augusta, armed men showed up open carrying firearms for no other reason than to intimidate me and the other people I was with, to try to make us feel threatened and discourage us from making our voices heard. Unfortunately, in our current political climate of increasing polarization, we cannot take for granted the ability of all people to equally exercise their right to vote. We should allow municipalities to decide if prohibiting firearms at the polls would best serve their own residents. Exercising the right to vote is one of the most cherished and important parts of the democratic process. Please protect it, and vote Ought to Pass on LD 805. I would add that we should not wait for gun violence or armed voter intimidation to occur before we take action. Thank you.