

An Act to Improve Firearm Safety in Maine

Maine has one of the highest rates of gun ownership in the United States. Yet, there is no standard for firearm safety. This bill seeks to improve firearm safety by creating safety standards required to be met by all firearm owners and users. It does not seek to limited ownership or use.

This bill will accomplish the following:

- 1) Standards of firearm safety will be determined and curricula will be developed. This will be accomplished by organizing a summit (The summit will occur in June 2016) where firearm owners, private and non-profit organizations associated with firearms (e.g., Maine Gun Owners of Maine, The Sportsmen Alliance of Maine, and The National Rifle Association), representatives of law enforcement, legislators, representatives from Maine Departments such as Inland Fisheries and Wildlife and the Maine State Police, veterans, and other interested stakeholders and Maine citizens will gather to provide input and develop basic firearm safety standards;
- 2) Inputs will also be solicited and accepted via written comment (Comments will be accepted between June and August 2016);
- 3) A Commission will be formed to take the input of recommended firearm safety from the summit and received written comments and develop:
 - a. A list of firearm safety standards; and
 - b. Acceptable curricula for firearm safety courses;
 - c. A list of organizations eligible (and certified) to teach firearm safety;
 - d. Acceptable prior experience and course completion recognizing knowledge of firearm safety, for example law enforcement officials and veterans, individuals possessing a hunter safety course completion certificate, etc.;
 - e. The commission will meet up to three times in the fall (Between Sept and November 2016);
 - f. The Commission will provide their recommendations to the 128th Legislature for approval (The commission shall provide their report to the Legislature by December 15th, 2016);
 - g. The Commission shall consist of legislators, Maine State Departmental representatives, organizations associated with firearms, veterans and concerned stakeholders.
- 4) The Legislature will take the Commissions recommendations for action in the first session of the 128th Legislature;
- 5) A list of standards and approved courses for firearm safety will be approved by June 2016;
- 6) All firearm owners and users will be required to obtain certification by July 2017;

- 7) All firearm owners and users will be required, upon request from appropriate authorities, to provide proof firearm safety certification.

Important aspects of this bill:

- 1) This bill does not seek to limit access to firearms or their use;
- 2) The resulting firearm safety certificate should not become or be viewed as a deterrent to firearm usage or ownership;
- 3) The education process or identification of previous firearm safety training should not be onerous;
- 4) The fee associated with a firearm safety certificate shall be cover basic administration requirements and nothing more;
- 5) The firearm safety certification, once obtained, shall be good for the lifetime of the holder; and
- 6) The State shall maintain a database so that firearm owners and users can easily demonstrate their completion of firearm safety.

Summary: This bill seeks to improve firearm safety by creating safety standards required to be met by all firearm owners and users. It does not seek to limit firearm ownership or use. It is only meant to ensure all firearm owners and users meet a level of firearm safety and proper usage for the purpose of minimizing firearm accidents.