



Gun Owners of Maine News Bulletin

August/September 2017

LEGISLATURE ADJOURNS, GUN RIGHTS PREVAIL

Gun owners make advances, Opponents meet only failure

The First Session of the 128th Legislature drew to a dramatic close after a budget impasse and State government shutdown, but before the end, a number of bills affecting gun owners were considered, some good, some bad, and some very bad.

Gun Owners of Maine, together with Sportman's Alliance of Maine and the National Rifle Association, fought hard to support bills to defend and extend gun rights, and to defeat the many bills which would erode those rights. With your help, we had a pretty good year. While not every pro-gun bill succeeded, many did, and **every anti-gun bill was defeated**, or in one case, amended into harmless form.

A total of four new pro-gun bills became law, and seven anti-gun bills were defeated.

New Pro-Gun Laws

LD 9, sponsored by Rep. Patrick Corey, is a landmark piece of legislation for Maine. It is a blanket ban on the establishment of a gun or gun owner registry. It passed with overwhelming support in the House on a 122 to 24 vote, and on a unanimous vote in the Senate. Well done, Rep. Corey!

LD 350, sponsored by Rep. Lance Harvell, eliminates a little-known

Your Freedom Isn't Free

Mainers are fortunate to live in a place where they enjoy some of the best firearms laws in the country. Gun Owners of Maine has helped make it that way, and helps keep it that way. But the reality is that, even for a grassroots organization like us, it takes resources to carry out our mission to defend and extend gun rights. And the past year, with a richly-funded anti-gun referendum and a legislative agenda full of anti-gun bills, has stretched us pretty thin. We survive on the support of gun owners like yourself, for whom your gun rights are too valuable to leave to someone else's generosity. Paid memberships, donations and raffle ticket sales are all important forms of support for our work. Please consider supporting us, so we can continue to defend and extend our gun rights, and pass them along to the next generation.

requirement for gun dealers to make a copy of the Federal form 4473 on every gun sale, and provide that form to any law enforcement official who demands it, without warrant, suspicion, or any reason at all. Few gun dealers knew of this law, but anti-gunners would certainly have made use of it in time.

LD 693, sponsored by Rep. Joel Stetkis, reforms the prohibition on loaded long guns in or on motor vehicles which often resulted in innocent shooters and hunters being cited for unintentional violations. No longer will merely resting a firearm on a vehicle while hunting or target shooting constitute a crime.

LD 1323, sponsored by Rep. Louis Luchini, makes a number

of reforms to the Citizen Initiative petition signature-gathering process to help curtail fraudulent practices by unscrupulous professional petition circulators, their employees and clients. The Citizen Initiative process has become a favorite tool of anti-gun forces, and this law is an important step toward maintaining the integrity of Maine's ballot.

Anti-Gun Bills Defeated

Three bills which were designed to erode Maine's state firearms regulation pre-emption statute were defeated. Rep. Spear's **LD 351**, which would have allowed towns and cities to write a patchwork of local ordinances and rules restricting and prohibiting firearms from public meetings, proceedings and voting places was killed, as was

LD 443, which would have allowed municipally-funded hospitals to prohibit firearms, and Rep. Sheats' **LD 1050**, which would permit firearms to be prohibited from emergency medical services vehicles owned by or operated on behalf on a municipality. Had any of these bills succeeded, that exception to state pre-emption would have been used to justify the next round of exceptions.

LD 352, from Rep. Rykerson, would have required all firearms dealers to sell a gun lock with every firearm. Not the lock that they all come with from the manufacturer, however. This would have to be a lock, sold at additional cost, which is approved by a firearm safety laboratory recognized by *the State of California's Department of Justice*. You read that correctly; this bill would have placed Maine citizens under the authority of the State of California.

LD 501, Sen. Miramant's bill, would have required anyone buying any firearm to provide proof of safety training, regardless of prior experience. Military veterans and 85-year-old lifelong hunters would either have to dig up documentary evidence of training, or take a safety course in order to exercise their rights in Senator Miramant's world.

But the two most dangerous anti-gun bills defeated this year were the work of a long-time gun opponent and a newcomer eager to establish his anti-gun credentials. Sen. Dion, who has introduced many anti-gun bills over the years, sponsored **LD 1175**, a Bloomberg-backed bill that was introduced in several states this year, would have established so-called "Gun Violence Restraining Orders", which are really just a way to lower the standard of evidence needed for law enforcement to confiscate firearms from citizens they deem a danger.

Not to be outdone, freshman House member Owen Casas managed to introduce the worst gun bill of the session, with his **LD 1154**, which began life as a virtually identical copy of the Question 3 Universal Background Check legislation defeated by voters in November 2016. Receiving fierce opposition from Gun Owners of Maine, the bill went through several changes, ending up as a provision for citizens to request a driver's license that identifies them as not prohibited from purchasing a firearm -- and thereby self-identifying as a gun owner to anyone who sees the driver's license. Rep. Casas eventually withdrew his increasingly ludicrous bill.

Good Bills That Didn't Make It

Although we scored a number of victories and denied to anti-gunners even a single win, not all pro-gun bills succeeded. Two bills by Sen. Eric Brakey to remove unwanted last-minute amendments to 2015's Constitutional Carry bill -- the 21-year-old age limit and the duty-to-notify requirement -- were defeated. Sen. Mason's bill which would have permitted adults picking up or dropping off students at school to possess a firearm in their vehicle failed, as did Rep. Richard Cebra's bill which would have permitted college students to carry firearms on campus. And Rep. MaryAnne Kinney's bill which would have required property owners who prohibit firearms on their premises to accept responsibility for the safety of those they cause to be disarmed did not advance.

Each of these bills would have advanced the cause of gun rights, and although they did not become law this session, it sometimes takes several attempts before a particular idea becomes law. For most -- perhaps all -- of these bills, this was their first time before the Legislature. We will

continue to advocate for these ideas in future sessions, until they are law.

Constitutional Carry took decades of patience and work on the part of many people. These bills will succeed as well, if Maine's gun community focuses its effort.

New Gun Owner? Try SAFER!

If you are a new firearm owner, or if you know someone who is, consider taking Gun Owners of Maine's 100% free online gun safety course, SAFER. It's available 24 hours a day at safer-maine.org, and provides a good basic grounding in handguns, concealed carry, firearms safety and the law as it relates to firearms and their use.

Gun Owners of Maine, Inc. is a volunteer, grassroots Maine nonprofit corporation dedicated to preserving and protecting the right of the people to keep and bear arms, and assists members and nonmembers alike in locating training and educational resources to further responsible firearms handlings and ownership. Gun Owners of Maine is a nonpartisan citizen activist group and does not endorse any political group.

Help support our mission to defend and extend gun rights by being an informed gun owner. Like our Facebook Page and join our Facebook Group (just search for Gun Owners of Maine), and visit our web site at gunownersofmaine.org.

