



## **For Immediate Release**

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### **MAINE GUN SAFETY ANNOUNCES GUN GIVEBACK PROGRAM ON JUNE 11**

On June 11, 2022, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., the Maine Gun Safety Coalition will lead a gun giveback program across the state of Maine. In participation with local police and sheriff departments, the public will be invited to give unwanted firearms and ammunition in a safe, legal, responsible manner to the participating stations. This year's participating police departments are Saco, Cape Elizabeth, Scarborough, Falmouth, Yarmouth, Waterville, Brunswick, Topsham and Bath. Topsham and Bath will be coordinating with the Sagadahoc County Sheriff's Department to have a single drop off location at the Sheriff's Office in Bath.

Covid precautions will be followed to ensure the transfer is safe for all involved. Any type of firearm is welcome - handgun, long gun, shotgun, working or non-functioning, made of any material. Those wishing to dispose of an unwanted firearm and/or ammunition can simply drive up to any of the participating stations and volunteers and members of law enforcement will remove the items. Gun locking devices will be distributed free of charge to the public during the program as well.

A press conference will be held at 12p.m on June 11 at the Falmouth Police Department (2 Marshall Drive) where members of law enforcement, members of the Maine Gun Safety Coalition, representatives from Humanium Metal and other advocates will provide comments, and a firearm destruction will be conducted by members of Maine's Blacksmith Guild.

June 11 marks a national gun giveback day with participating locations in over 30 states. In Maine, all of the firearms collected will be destroyed on location by members of Maine's Blacksmith Guild. The parts will then be transported to the Guild's foundry, smelted down and shipped to Pittsburgh where the metal will be turned into an array of jewelry and men's and women's watches. These, in turn, will be sold, and all proceeds will be returned to the Maine Gun Safety Coalition to further our work advocating for gun safety laws and regulations in Augusta and Washington, D.C., enabling MGSC to expand our gun giveback programs in the future. This is our first year partnering with Humanium Metal, a global nonprofit based in Sweden that has done similar work in Africa and South America. Maine will be their first project

in America. The American Academy of Pediatrics of Maine is also serving as a co-sponsor of the event.

MGSC ran a similar one-day gun giveback program in 2019 at 11 different police stations and over 500 guns and 10,000 rounds of ammunition were taken in.

Regarding his department's participation in the event, Saco Police Chief Jack Clements stated: "The program by the Maine Gun Safety Coalition, in partnership with Maine law enforcement, provides a great avenue for folks to dispose of unwanted firearms."

Maine Gun Safety Coalition Executive Director Geoff Bickford stated: "Nearly every day in Maine, a child discovers an unsecured firearm. A veteran or teen in a moment of crisis uses a firearm to take their life. A gun is stolen from a camp in the off-season and traded for narcotics, or transported to cities like Boston and New York and used to injure and kill others. The value in this program is that every firearm out of a home is one that won't be used when it shouldn't be."

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*Maine Gun Safety Coalition is a grassroots organization founded in 2000 to protect Maine families and communities from gun violence. We advocate for evidence-based policies by initiating legislation, convening stakeholders, and electing candidates who support common sense gun laws. Our mission is to save lives through education, research, and programming. We educate parents, health care providers, law enforcement, and the public about preventing domestic violence, suicides, and illegal gun use. We provide free trigger locks to prevent unintentional shootings and firearm theft.*