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## Testimony in support of LD 60: 'An Act to Require a 72-hour Waiting Period After the Sale of a Firearm'.

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Salisbury and distinguished members of the Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety, my name is Melissa Burch, MD and I am a resident of Orono, Maine, a practicing pediatrician, and a board member of the Maine Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. I am submitting testimony in support of LD 60.

As a pediatrician, I am very aware of the escalating mental health crisis for our young Americans. Every week I see multiple teens struggling with depression. In some, that leads to suicidal thoughts and for others, an intent to act on this, often impulsively. Access to a firearm greatly increases the risk of death when children or adults attempt suicide.

Attempts with drug overdose, the most common method, are fatal in only 3% of cases. Attempts with a firearm/gun increases the risk of death in that depressed teen as 90% or more attempts using guns end in death.

Anyone who is a parent or works with youth directly is aware of the impulsivity characteristic of adolescence resulting in poorly thought-out actions. In some cases, there is little or no warning, no sign of increased depression before a teen or young adult makes an abrupt decision or takes a potentially fatal action. It can stem from a break-up in a relationship or problems at school. We know from interviews of those who survive a suicide attempt, that typically there is less than an hour of contemplation before taking potentially fatal action. As our current laws are written, a Maine teen can drive to their nearest Walmart, legally purchase a firearm, leave the store and take their own life within that one hour.

LD 60 would give that individual three days to get help. LD 60 helps to protect the lives of individuals in a mental health crisis and intentionally create a buffer which could allow for a different decision to be made. Suicide is not just a youth issue, and this law would protect people in crisis of all ages. In our state, every year, more than 200 people die of suicide. Most of those suicide fatalities involve firearms. Let's do what we can to help save the lives of those Mainers and give them a chance to get help before it is too late.

I urge you to vote YES on LD 60 to proactively save lives in Maine.