

To: Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Salisbury, and members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee

I am Deanna Korey of Westbrook Maine, writing in support of LD 168: An Act Regarding Criminal Background Checks for the Sale, Transfer or Exchange of Firearms.

(I also support LD 22, An Act to Impede the Transfer of Firearms to Prohibited Persons, and LD 60, An Act to require a 72-hr. Waiting Period After the Sale of a Firearm.)

I am the granddaughter of a gun-owning hunter, and like many of us living in the relatively “safe” state of Maine, I also have family and friends scattered throughout this country, with its patchwork of state gun laws.

Last April 2022, in a heart stopping moment, I learned of a mass shooting in a Brooklyn subway that injured 29 people. I recognized the train line as the one used by my daughter and 3-yr old grandson for their morning commute, and yes, they were on that train. Smoke, blood, chaos, and panic ensued as riders rushed from cars and pressed to escape at the next subway stop, alongside the shooter. The shooter had 12 prior arrests, and although he acted in NY, a state with strong gun laws, he bought his weapon at a pawnshop in Ohio, a state with weak gun laws, and with no background checks for private sales. The weapon could easily have been purchased in Maine. This is a common pattern of interstate movement of crime guns in the nation, with Maine being a robust part of that gun transit-- known as a source state for crime weapons in the Northeast, often with drug trade involved. (Does Maine want this distinction, along with having the highest rates of youth and veteran suicides)?

In the absence of common-sense *federal* legislation, Maine should join 22 other states and enact background checks for private gun sales. I urge the committee to support LD 168.

Thank you for considering this important public health issue.

Deanna Korey