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American Academy of Pediatrics

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Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Salisbury, and distinguished members of the Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety, my name is Joe Anderson. I am a resident of Portland, a hospital-based pediatrician, and I sit on the Board of the Maine Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. I am writing today to express our **support for LD 60, An Act to Require a 72-hour Waiting Period After the Sale of a Firearm**. We urge you to vote Ought to Pass on this bill.

As individuals in positions of leadership or influence in our communities, I'm sure you've been asked the question "What keeps you up at night?" As a pediatrician, that issue is gun violence. I have cared for children and teenagers who have suffered life-altering injuries or death as a result of firearms far more often than I care to admit. Their injuries are seared into my memory and serve as a constant reminder of how unbelievably easy it is in this country for children and teenagers to have their lives interrupted by firearms, made possible by weak policies regarding gun safety.

Gun violence is a public health crisis in the US, where deaths by firearms have outpaced motor vehicle accidents as the leading cause of death for children and teens aged 1 to 19 in the United States.¹ There are significant opportunities to improve these statistics with gun safety policies that are supported by a majority of Americans, and in many cases by most gun owners as well.

LD 60 requires a 72-hour waiting period for the sale of a firearm. Most of us are familiar with purchasing products online and would not consider a 3-day shipping window to be particularly burdensome as a consumer. Waiting periods are an under-utilized, evidence-based strategy for reducing death and injuries by firearms. Waiting periods give law enforcement sufficient time to perform an accurate background check and create a "cooling off" period to prevent acts of violence or suicide attempts. States with such laws had 51% fewer firearm suicides than those without. Over 70% of Americans without a firearm in the home support longer waiting periods for gun purchases.²

The American Academy of Pediatrics is committed to protecting children from firearm-related injury and violence. We support specific measures to reduce the destructive effects of guns in the lives of children and adolescents. We urge each of you to consider the potential lives you could save as a result of enacting these pieces of legislation and urge you to support LD 60.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joe Anderson DO".

Joe Anderson, DO, FAAP, Co-Chair, Advocacy Committee

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC Wonder. 2021 (<https://wonder.cdc.gov/>).

² American Academy of Pediatrics. Waiting Periods for Firearms Purchases. 2023 (<https://www.aap.org/en/advocacy/state-advocacy/waiting-periods-for-firearms-purchases>).