

Testimony

Senators, representatives, and committee members, my name is Reid Quirk, and I am an eighth grader from Orono, ME. This document is for the support of LD 2238: An Act to Address Gun Violence in Maine by Requiring a Waiting Period for Certain Firearm Purchases.

I have heard many stories of gun homicides and suicides all across the country, and even in my town. For example, a young person from my town just recently went to our local gun store, bought a gun, and committed suicide. This is devastating for our town, and to be honest, I didn't think I would ever experience a suicide near me, especially from my same school. Most likely, if this law were in place, it could have saved that young person's life.

Also, a few years ago my middle school had a lockdown because of a gun threat. I don't know if you have had the experience of a lockdown, or considered being a victim of a mass shooting, but just the idea of being able to be killed at school is quite scary. When I lived in Costa Rica for a year, the idea of getting killed at school, or even anywhere by a gun, never entered my head. In Costa Rica, there is a law that states that anybody who wants to buy a gun has to have a permit. In addition, the seller will need to run extensive background checks on the person, and a mental evaluation. Those laws ended up making the Costa Rican gun death rates a lot lower: [1.28 out of 100,000](#) residents died on average last year by guns in Costa Rica, compared to America's [4.31](#).

After doing some research on this topic, I found evidence of how this law could change the death rates in our state. According to the [Portland Press Herald](#), 72% of Mainers support gun purchasing waiting periods and background checks. Furthermore, most people who die by guns die by suicide. That means that waiting periods could help the buyer get over the extreme depression they are feeling, or maybe second guess themselves, saving their own life.

Some people may say if we take away guns, people will still kill themselves. Nevertheless, according to [Everytown Research and Policy](#), which is a gun control advocacy group, 90% of attempted suicides with firearms end in death compared to 4% with all other methods. This shows how dangerous guns are, and how important it is to stop how easy it is for normal people to buy a firearm. This means that this bill could lower the most common cause of suicide in America.

Some people say that we won't pass this law because it is unpleasant for hunters to have to wait to buy their weapons. However many hunting states [have this law in place](#). Vermont, Minnesota, and Colorado are examples.

Finally, there is a lot of evidence in recent history that waiting periods work. According to [Science, a research](#) journal, in 1994-1998 when there was a nationwide law about firearm purchase waiting periods, the country saw a 17% drop in gun-related homicides. Also, in recent years, they found that states with mandatory waits, no matter how long they were, had 10% fewer suicides. This is a drastic change, and if Maine followed their lead by instituting a waiting period, we could see the same results.

Imagine having to practice with your classmates hiding in a corner of your room, hiding from a crazy person trying to shoot you. That may sound insane and too extreme, but it is a reality for me and all of my friends. Let's have our state's gun violence rates lowered, to ensure future kids' experiences in Maine's schools.