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I work in a public library, and it is my honor and privilege to serve the public every day, helping people with everything from picking up tax forms to learning to use technology to finding a study guide, filling out a job application, or discovering their new favorite author.

However, working in a public place comes with a constant, low-level tension and fear of violence. I know my friends and colleagues who work in schools feel it, too. I imagine that most folks who work in grocery stores, movie theaters, or any other publicly accessible place think about it. I'm 34 years old, and everyone I know who is my age or younger thinks about it wherever we go: what would I do if someone started shooting right now?

It's not a paralyzing fear. We get up and go to work, run errands, live our lives. But it's ever-present. You can bet that in both the Maine libraries I have worked in over the past decade, I've had in mind the various stairwells and closets and strange hiding places that might save my life if the worst should happen. It feels almost normal to think that way, at this point, but when I step back and realize how integrated into my life the fear of gun violence is, I am horrified. And yet, you cannot look at the events that unfold across our country, including in Maine, again and again and again, and tell me that my fears are unjustified.

Any and all actions that can be taken to reduce the senseless deaths from gun violence, should be taken. A human life is precious. I want to assert here that MY life is more important than someone else's right to carry a deadly weapon wherever they wish. I should not have to live in fear, nor should my colleagues, nor should your children.

This bill has sensible measures to take a step forward in preventing gun violence, in easing the psychic burden all of us feel moving about the world. I hope that it will pass, and act as a starting point for more reform going forward. Legislators, please help to make fearing for our safety less of a daily truth.