



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Testimony of Rep. Kristen Cloutier in support of

LD 2237, An Act to Strengthen Public Safety, Health and Well-being by Expanding Services and Coordinating Violence Prevention Resources

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

Good morning Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer and distinguished members of the Health and Human Services Committee. My name is Kristen Cloutier, and I represent House District 94, which includes part of my hometown of Lewiston. I am honored to cosponsor the incredibly important bill before you today: **LD 2237, An Act to Strengthen Public Safety, Health and Well-being by Expanding Services and Coordinating Violence Prevention Resources.**

Every day, I am reminded of how the aftermath of a senseless act of gun violence in one community has ripple effects on our entire state, impacting how each and everyone of us lives out our days. Since October 25th, our communities have been constantly on edge, in fear that another mass casualty event is only moments away. We are in the midst of a public health crisis, and we must act now to prevent future gun-related tragedies and the long-lasting psychological and emotional trauma that comes along with them.

LD 2237 uses a public health approach to gun violence prevention that addresses both access to firearms and the factors that contribute to and protect us from gun violence.

This proposal contains seven major initiatives that will protect the well-being of all Mainers, including increasing mobile health crisis units, enabling the mobile health crisis system to connect to 911 emergency dispatch; providing funding for six new crisis receiving centers; establishing an Office of Violence Prevention; providing funding to reduce waiting lists and increase access to medication management services; providing retailers, instructors, and customers of all experience levels with firearm suicide prevention educational materials; and creating and implementing a statewide system to alert the public when there is an active shooter situation.

I am committed to supporting common-sense public health and gun safety measures, and I know many of you here on this committee are as well. As lawmakers, it is our responsibility to do everything in our power to ensure that a tragedy like the one that took place in my home community of Lewiston never happens again. Thoughts and prayers are not enough, and they never have been. This moment requires meaningful action to make our communities safer.

Thank you.