

Meret Bainbridge, 26 Cleveland Street, Saco, ME 04072

Testimony in support of LD 2086, An Act to Amend the Law Governing the Disposition of Forfeited Firearms (Sen. Carney) & LD 2119, An Act to Support Suicide Prevention by Allowing the Voluntary Waiver of Firearm Rights (Sen. Doudera)

Committee on Judiciary, combined PH 3/5/2024

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen and Members of the Committee on Judiciary,

My name is Meret Bainbridge, I am a resident of Saco, a healthcare provider, and a Unitarian Universalist. I am also a native of Germany which has much stricter firearms laws than the United States and I present my testimony informed by that background.

I am submitting testimony in favor of both LD 2086 & LD 2119.

Our mental health care system is in a severe crisis, lacking much needed treatment options for people in mental health crisis situations at risk of harming themselves or others by committing suicide, homicide, and other acts of violence, including gun violence.

While the need for improved crisis counseling services is addressed in other bills (The Speaker's bill, LD 2237 and the Governor's bill, LD 2224), these two bills relate to the access to firearms – which unfortunately leads to a high number of suicides by firearms in Maine. Suicide by gun is immediate and irreversible, and a moment of despair can lead to a rash decision that ends a life that may otherwise have had a chance for intervention and proper treatment. LD 2119 would allow a person who knows they are at risk of committing suicide to waive their right to purchase or receive a firearm, thus protecting themselves from such a rash and deadly decision. LD 2086 would expand the current law mandating the destruction of firearms used in a criminal homicide to all guns used in any crime. Firearms used in crimes should be destroyed rather than disassembled and sold in parts where they could be reassembled into new firearms.

As a native of Europe who has resided in the United States for 36 years I continue to be shocked at the vast proliferation of firearms in private possession in this country – there are more guns than people in the USA. Although I swore an oath to uphold the constitution when I became a US citizen, including the second amendment, personally I have never owned and will never own a gun because my faith directs me to be a pacifist.

Please vote OTP both LD 2086 & LD 2119.

Thank you.