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LD 2224

This testimony is in support for LD 2224

- The first part of this law closes the dangerous gap in current law that allows people to sell and buy guns without a background.
- LD 2224 would require background checks for all gun sales that are the result of advertising and is an important step toward keeping guns out of the hands of people who shouldn't have them, including domestic abusers, people convicted of other violent crimes, and others.

Some important points:

- Background checks are easy, convenient, and impose almost no burden on law-abiding gun purchasers. In about 90% of cases background checks are resolved almost immediately, often in a manner of minutes.
- They also rarely provide false-positive results. (The FBI's data demonstrates background checks are accurate approximately 99.3 to 99.8% of the time.)
- Around 80% of all firearms acquired for criminal purposes are obtained through transfers from unlicensed sellers who are not required to perform background checks under Maine or federal law.
- There will be no registry as a result of this bill. All records for background checks are, by law, kept only by the dealer who sold them. There is no state or federal registry, and this bill would not create one.

Leaders in Maine must act to expand background checks and hold reckless sellers accountable to keep guns out of the hands of people who can't have them.

The second part of this law would make modest changes to the current Yellow Flag Law to make it easier to evaluate people in crisis.

When used correctly, Yellow Flag Laws can be an important tool for law enforcement to remove access to firearms from someone when they are experiencing a mental health crisis and are a threat to themselves or others.

Most people who are mentally ill are not more likely to commit acts of violence. And people who are at an elevated risk of committing acts of violence or self-harm are not necessarily mentally ill. With that in mind, it is critical, when looking to prevent tragedies, that we focus on behavior and not necessarily a mental health diagnoses.

By focusing on behavior we can more effectively identify people who are at risk.

Since the Lewiston shooting there has been a large increase in the use of the Yellow Flag Law which demonstrate just how many Mainers need help and also how desperate the need is for their friends, family and local law enforcement officials to have more tools to separate those Mainers in crisis from guns and prevent tragedies before they happen.

We have all know someone who was going through a hard time and possibly a risk to themselves or others. Friends and family members are often the first people to notice when someone needs help. The expansion of The Yellow Flag Law would it easier for them and for law enforcement personal to get weapons away from someone who is a threat to themselves or others.

The tragedy in Lewiston, combined with the 150+ firearms suicides in Maine every year and the countless other acts of gun violence that take place in Maine, show how critical it is to give our law enforcement personnel more tools to keep us safe and families more tools to get their loves ones help.