

TO: The Honorable Anne Carney, Chair  
The Honorable Matt Moonen, Chair  
Members, Joint Standing Committee On Judiciary

DATE: March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024

RE: Support of LD 2224, *An Act to Strengthen Public Safety by Improving Maine's Firearm Laws and Mental Health System* and LD 2238, *An Act to Address Gun Violence in Maine by Requiring a Waiting Period for Certain Firearm Purchases*

Dear Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary:

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony while you consider these two bills that intend to improve the lives of Mainers by reducing firearm injury and firearm death from suicide, homicide, or other gun violence. I am a family physician practicing for over 15 years in the central Maine area. My spouse is an emergency room physician also practicing in central Maine. We are committed to improving the health of our communities, and we stand with many other healthcare professionals who want to see meaningful legislation passed that will reduce the incidence of firearm injury in our state. We are also gun owners.

I applaud Senator Rotundo for bringing forth the Governor's bill LD 2224 and am supportive of the bill. Focusing on injury and violence prevention and collecting data to help inform our future interventions is invaluable. Developing crisis receiving centers will be a great resource for individuals and families who are not sure where to turn for help. While I agree that having quickly accessible services is critically important to help address the mental health needs of Mainers, I wish to emphasize that gun safety reform and improving our resources to support behavioral and mental health are important separate steps in addressing this public health crisis. Individuals with mental illness account for a small fraction of violent crimes that are committed in this country; they are much more likely to be victims of violence.

Although in support of LD 2224, I request that the committee consider two changes: 1) expand background checks even further to make them truly universal, and 2) allow for families to have some recourse whereby they could directly petition for an Extreme Risk Protection Order. California and Maryland offer this for family members, recognizing that limiting the mechanisms of securing an Extreme Risk Protection Order to law enforcement and medical clinicians disempowers the people who are experiencing the high-risk individual's behavior firsthand.

I am firmly in support of LD 2238, also sponsored by Senator Rotundo. This bill would mandate a 72-hour waiting period between the purchase and sale of a firearm and delivery to the buyer. There are reasonable exemptions in the bill such as for law enforcement. While this 72-hour waiting period might be an inconvenience for some, it is a small price to pay for the health and safety of Mainers.

Thank you for your work on these important issues.

Amy Madden, MD  
Past President, Maine Medical Association  
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