

March 6, 2024

Testimony in favor of LD 2238 - An Act to Address Gun Violence in Maine by Requiring a Waiting Period for Certain Firearm Purchases—Vote “Ought to Pass”

Dear Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee,

Please support LD 2238 and vote “Ought to Pass.” Gun violence has become the Number 1 public health crisis in our state and in the nation. We must summon the political will to take strong action. I am in support of strong gun control legislation including LD 2238 which will require a waiting period for certain firearm purchases.

This bill would require that a background check be performed for all private firearms sales that are the result of advertising. This would mean that sales that take place at a gun show or online would need to also have a background check performed, just like if you bought a firearm at L.L. Bean, Cabela's, or another local gun dealer.

LD 2238 further incentivizes, but does not require, background checks for private unadvertised sales by making it easier to prosecute someone if they transfer a firearm to someone who is not allowed to have one. This would incentivize private sellers to get a background check performed before they transfer the firearm to someone they don't know.

Gun violence has become a public health emergency, as evidenced by the two horrific mass shootings here in Maine—Bowdoin and Lewiston. On October 25, 2023, eighteen people were killed and thirteen more injured in Lewiston. Because I live just three miles from the mass shooting and because the shooter's children attended public schools in our district, the impact of this tragedy rippled into my neighborhood where there were many social connections with the shooter, his family, and several victims.

I am a retired public school art teacher, and I remember the days when a school was the safest place to send your child. Now our children and teachers are traumatized by the epidemic of school shootings, and we must conduct “shelter in place” safety drills, should gunfire echo in our hallways.

By enacting LD 2238, the Maine Legislature we can go a long way toward protecting individuals who may be experiencing a mental health crisis, thereby protecting our public health and safety. I urge you in the strongest terms to vote “Ought to Pass.”

Sincerely,

Robin Brooks

(she, hers)

Topsham

**Key Messages: (courtesy of the Maine Gun Safety Coalition)**

- This proposal is a unique and welcome approach to substantially expanding the number of gun sales that are performed with a background check while respecting, and even encouraging, the culture of responsible gun ownership in Maine.
- Requiring background checks for online gun sales, sales at gun shows, and other sales that are the result of advertising is a crucial step forward in keeping guns out of the hands of people who shouldn't have them, including domestic abusers, people convicted of other violent crimes, and others.
- While protecting responsible gun owners, this bill takes important steps towards holding reckless sellers accountable for selling dangerous weapons to people they don't know.
- **Background checks are easy, convenient, and impose almost no burden on law-abiding gun purchasers.**
- **To be clear:** 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.

- **Call to action:** 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.

**Key Statistics:**

- An estimated 22% of US gun owners acquired their most recent firearm without a background check.<sup>7</sup>

- A recent large-scale survey found that 45% of gun owners who acquired a gun online in the past two years did so without any background check.<sup>8</sup>

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Topsham  
LD 2238

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