

Elizabeth Parsons
Portland
LD 2224

Senator Carney; Representative Moonen; and Members of the Committee;

Thank you for convening this hearing. Thanks, especially to co-chair Moonen who represents my district and is co-sponsoring LD 2224. My testimony in favor of LD 2224 and LD 2238 is based on experience with gun violence. In 2018, a beloved niece out west began suffering from depression. Her sister brought her to stay with her family in a state that shares many of Maine's cultural values. After weeks of the family's intense support, my niece seemed better. Days before she was scheduled to leave, however, she ended her life with a gun found in her sister's home.

While circumstances of my niece's death differ from that of Lewiston's devastating incident, both events illustrate the interconnection of mental health crises, easy gun availability, and tragedy pervading American society. We do not have to accept this situation as the price to pay for individual freedom. We can find ways of living differently, more healthily, together.

Living more healthily involves recognizing our interdependence and responsibility to/for each other. It's the sort of thing the world's great religions teach. In the Judeo-Christian faith I follow the "Golden Rule" is a great example. And, since a similar inter-connected spirit seems present in LD2224 and LD2238 I urge the Committee to vote "Ought to Pass" on both measures.

Thank you for your consideration and best wishes as you deliberate