

# Maine Chapter

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Sen. Carney, Rep. Moonen and members of the Judiciary Committee:

My name is Sydney Sewall, and I have been a Pediatrician in the Central Maine area since 1982. I am a long-term member of Maine AAP.

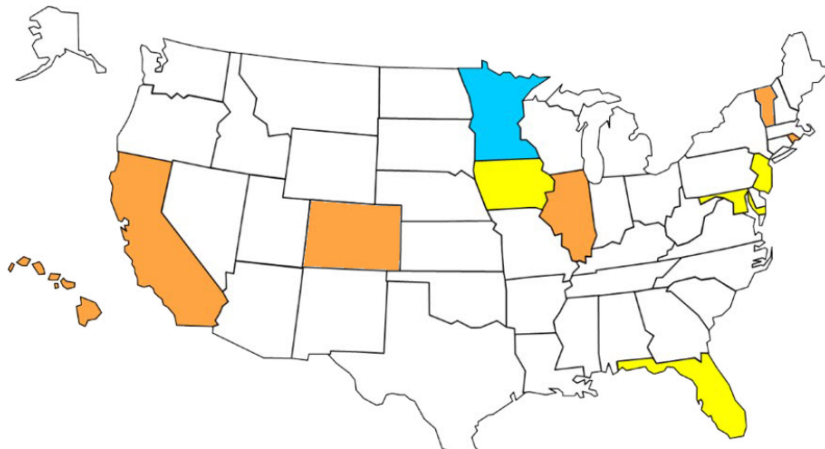
Firearms have the highest fatality rate (>95%) when compared with other means of suicide. The American Academy of Pediatrics believes that a multi-pronged approach to reducing deaths from gun violence includes a waiting period after firearm purchases.

Estimates of the efficacy of this measure for reducing successful suicides range from 15-20%. Similar reductions may also apply to homicides, especially those related to domestic violence.

Certainly, other approaches play a role in combating gun violence deaths, which sadly now exceed motor vehicle accidents as a cause of child mortality. Safe gun storage is crucial in general, but especially when families are at higher risk related to chronic mental health issues, and during an acute exacerbation. Improving mental health care accessibility – especially crisis intervention – also is an obvious component. BUT – reducing access to guns during a period of heightened impulsive behaviors is also key.

Maine would not be alone in passing a waiting period. States with these laws have reduced their gun suicides by 51% (AAP data).

- **6 states and DC** – impose waiting periods for purchases of all firearms
- **1 state** – imposes waiting periods for purchases of handguns & assault weapons
- **4 states** – impose waiting periods for handguns only



The Maine Chapter of the AAP strongly supports the passage of LD 2238.

Sincerely,

Sydney R. Sewall, MD MPH  
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