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I am writing to support passage of LD2238, An Act to Address Gun Violence in Maine by Requiring a Waiting Period of Certain Firearm Purchases. Waiting periods on gun purchases, by themselves and in conjunction with other regulations, save lives.

Maine has a terrible rate of suicide committed with guns. In many cases a person gets into a state of despair, buys a gun, and takes their life with it. If they had to wait a few days, they might emerge from that despair to a better place. Or they might instead dial 988 or speak with a friend or loved one and be persuaded to get counseling. In any case, a person who had thought they couldn't go on may take a turn toward a life of value to self and others. Saving someone from suicide not only keeps that person alive for a better day but also saves those who care for that person from incurable sorrow and regret.

Maine also has a terrible rate of gun violence in domestic situations. When someone who becomes enraged at their partner can go out and buy a gun without any waiting period, they can commit a deadly act while still enraged. The partner has no time to take any action that might save her life and the lives of the couple's children or spare them a lifetime of suffering.

David Trahan of the Sportsman's Alliance of Maine was quoted in the Sun Journal recently arguing that a waiting period would make it "more difficult for people who face violent threats—like he said he did after the Lewiston shooting—to obtain a weapon for self-defense." I live around the corner from the bowling alley where the shooting rampage in Lewiston began, I do not own a gun, and I did not buy one on October 26 last year. I relied on our law-enforcement officers, who had the training, the equipment, and the courage to scour the woods in Lisbon and enter the trailer where Robert Card could well have been waiting to face them. LD2238 specifically exempts law enforcement officers from its waiting period. No one who bought a gun in that tense period used it in self-defense or to protect our community.

People in our society are used to waiting for things they want. They have to wait to complete the purchase of a home. They have to wait to start a job. They often have to wait a long time for a medical treatment that could save their life. Being unwilling to wait three days to acquire a gun, when you know that that waiting period can save someone's life, is inhuman.