

Dear Chair and Members of the Judiciary Committee,

I am for the proposed legislation LD 2224, Background Checks and a Real Extreme Risk Protection Order. Current Maine Law lets people buy guns without any confirmation that they are legally allowed to do so. It also allows unlicensed sellers—people who sell guns online, at gun shows, or anywhere else without a federal dealer’s license—to transfer firearms without confirming that they are legally allowed to possess firearms. Because of these loopholes, people who are subject to domestic violence convictions or court orders, people who have been convicted of violent crimes, and people ineligible to possess firearms for mental health reasons can easily buy guns from unlicensed sellers with no background check in Maine.

LD 2224 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.

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.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Jonas
Maine Summer Camps Liaison