

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on the Judiciary:

My name is Corliss Davis; I live in Belfast; and I am testifying in strong support of LD2238, “An Act to Address Gun Violence in Maine by Requiring a Waiting Period for Certain Firearm Purchases,” sponsored by Senator Margaret Rotundo of Androscoggin.

My husband and I are members of the Unitarian-Universalist Church of Belfast and active volunteers with the Maine UU State Advocacy Network. MUUSAN’s Gun Safety Action Team has chosen LD2238 as one of two bills to prioritize this session.

Unitarian Universalists believe strongly in the inherent worth and dignity of every person and we seek to treat everyone with justice, equity, and compassion. In aiming to reduce both suicide and homicide deaths by gun, LD2238 fulfills both of these deeply held values of our faith.

I was struck by Susan Young’s recent op-ed the [Bangor Daily News](https://www.bangordailynews.com/2024/03/01/opinion/opinion-contributor/stricter-gun-laws-reduce-suicide-risk/) “Stricter gun laws reduce suicide risk.” (<https://www.bangordailynews.com/2024/03/01/opinion/opinion-contributor/stricter-gun-laws-reduce-suicide-risk/> March 1, 2024) Ms. Young points out that not only are three-fifths of all gun deaths in the U.S. suicides, but in Maine 90% of gun deaths are typically suicides. In 2021, Maine had the 15<sup>th</sup> highest suicide rate in the country. These are statistics we should be horrified to acknowledge.

The “buffer” or “cooling off” period such as the 72-hour waiting period required by LD2238, can help to prevent impulsive acts of personal or societal gun violence. I recently met a hunter and owner of multiple guns who told me that he does not feel at all threatened by gun safety legislation being considered this month. He supports the 72-hour waiting period because it gives gun buyers additional time to think about their decision and any actions they were planning. If waiting periods can reduce suicides and homicides by even 10-15%, as studies have shown, think of the precious lives that could be saved.

We often must wait to take possession of major purchases like automobiles, appliances, and furniture. Why shouldn’t potentially dangerous weapons be treated with the same reasonable precautions? I urge you to vote “ought to pass” on LD2238.

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