

*My name is Valerie Kelly; I live on Peaks Island. I am testifying in support of **LD 2224** “An Act to Strengthen Public Safety by Improving Maine's Firearm Laws and Mental Health System” and **LD2238** “An Act to Address Gun Violence in Maine by Requiring a Waiting Period for Certain Firearm Purchases”.*

*As most Maine residents, I was shocked by the October 25<sup>th</sup> events in Lewiston, Maine. The only good coming from this terrible event is the renewed attention and apparent coming together of all Mainers to demand legislative action that simultaneously addresses mental health and gun access issues. I was proud to be among the 1000 or more Maine citizens at the State House on January 3<sup>rd</sup> to lobby for improved gun safety and mental health legislation. I'm unable to attend today's committee meetings in person, so am offering this testimony in strong support of both LD2224 and LD2238.*

*Statistics available on the loss of Maine citizens to death by firearms are sobering:*

*178 lost in 2021 (89% suicides and 11% homicides, of which 37% were due to domestic violence)  
154 lost in 2020 (86% suicides and 11% homicides, of which 35% were due to domestic violence)*

*These statistics from a [CDC report](#) to the Maine State Legislature underscore what most of Maine's citizens already know: Maine faces both mental health and gun access challenges.*

*U.S. research on policies that can reduce gun violence is limited, but the [Rand Corporation](#) has critically reviewed and synthesized available studies. Their analyses show that despite the patchwork quilt of gun safety legislation across the U.S., the following types of legislation tend to reduce firearm suicides and/or violent crime.*

- *child access prevention laws*
- *waiting periods for gun purchases*
- *background checks for gun purchases*
- *domestic violence prohibitions*
- *surrender of firearms by prohibited possessors*

*Let us make Maine the next state to show that gun access waiting periods, when accompanied by access to mental health services and laws that facilitate temporary removal of guns from those in crisis, do save lives.*

*For those who think a 72-hour waiting period is too inconvenient, or taking a gun away from someone showing signs of mental distress violates constitutional rights; I ask you to put yourself briefly in the shoes of those who have lost a loved one to suicide or to domestic violence by firearms. Let's be guided by empathy for those who have already suffered the devastating effects of gun violence and take steps together to make Maine a safer place for everyone.*

*Thank-you for the opportunity to testify.*

*Links to sources: [CDC](#) and [Rand](#).*