



Testimony to the Judiciary Committee's Public Hearing on: LD2224, 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

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and Members of the Committee:
Senator Margaret Rotundo, D – Androscoggin; Representative Kristen Sarah Cloutier, D – Lewisto; President Troy D. Jackson, D – Aroostook; Senator Matthea Daughtry, D – Cumberland; Senator Eloise A. Vitelli, D – Sagadahoc; Representative Maureen Fitzgerald Terry, D – Gorham; Speaker Rachel Talbot Ross, D - Portland

March 7, 2024

My name is the Rev. Ian Lynch, a resident of Waterville. I am offering testimony on behalf of the Maine Conference of the United Church of Christ (UCC) and as a member of its Social Action Committee to **in support of LD 2224 and LD 2238.**

Other members of our committee have also submitted testimony, which I wholeheartedly support. I would like to add a reflection from our experience responding to the Lewiston shooting. As a religious organization concerned for the spiritual and emotional well being not just of our members but of the wider communities where we are present, we felt that it was vital to gather in order to nurture healing. In February we held three “sacred conversations” to address the trauma of gun violence that we had collectively experienced. Each was well attended, with participants engaging in important, heartfelt dialogue.

We were prepared to address sorrow and pain. While that was present, the sessions were filled with desire for change. Numerous attendees actually expressed disappointment that there was no ready plan for action. This feels typical in my experience of most people of faith. We have long understood that thoughts and prayers, as important as they are, are insufficient to prevent the next tragedy. Our scripture teaches that faith without works is dead. That is why are here now calling on you to enact sensible legislation that would see our faith put into action.

Submitted by,
Ian Lynch
Maine Conference United Church of Christ
Social Action Committee Member
Waterville Resident
Pastor of First Congregational Church UCC, Waterville