

Sally Chappell
Pax Christi Maine
LD 2224

Sen. Carney, Rep. Moonen and honorable members of the Judiciary Committee: My name is Sally Chappell; I live in Bridgton and am a member of Pax Christi Maine. On behalf of Pax Christi Maine, the Catholic peace and justice movement with members throughout the State of Maine, I'd like to testify in favor of LD 2224, An Act to Strengthen Public Safety by improving Maine's Firearm Laws and Mental Health System. Pax Christi's firm commitment to non-violence recognizes the importance of this bill in averting preventable injury and death.

The Lewiston mass shooter, Robert Card, was a threat to himself and others and could have been prevented from carrying out his violent acts if Maine had a stronger yellow flag law, which LD 2224 would address if enacted. Robert Card's brain has been studied, and the report shows that he had suffered traumatic brain injury. Despite the warning signals he displayed prior to his rampage, law enforcement was not able to disarm him.

People in Maine can buy guns without a background check even though 93% of Americans approve of background checks, a number which includes 89% of Republicans and 89% of gun owners according to Everytown and Gifford Gun Safety Memo. Let us join the 21 other states that have closed the background check loophole.

According to Everytown Gun Law Rankings, "when we compare the states head-to-head on the top 50 gun safety policies, a clear pattern emerges. States with strong laws see less gun violence." Maine occupies a place in the middle of the rankings in a group described as "missing key laws." Comparing 50 gun safety policies, there are "national leaders", those "making progress", a group "missing key laws," ones with "weak systems," and "national failures." LD 2224 is a reasonable bill that will provide needed help to law enforcement and concerned family members of people with mental health challenges.

Thank you for your time reading and considering this testimony. Pax Christi Maine urges you to vote "ought to pass" on LD 2224.