

Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary
State House, Room 438
Thursday, March 7th, 2024

Testimony in Support of LD 2224, “An Act to Strengthen Public Safety by Improving Maine’s Firearm Laws and Mental Health System” and LD 2238, “An Act to Address Gun Violence in Maine by Requiring a Waiting Period for Certain Firearm Purchases”

Good afternoon Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and honorable members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Ruby Paarlberg and I am currently a senior at Bates College. I am here today to provide written testimony in support of LD.2224 and LD.2238.

Since 2020, I have been a student at Bates College in Lewiston, Maine. Lewiston has become a second home to me and a place that I felt safe in until October 25th, 2023, when one of the deadliest mass shootings in the United States occurred. On the night of October 25th, I had to lock myself in a classroom with other students to protect myself from an active shooter who was just minutes away from campus. I spent the rest of the night in that classroom and was ushered back to my room in the early morning by Bates Campus Safety. For the next few days when the shooter was still not located, I grappled with feelings of fear for the safety of myself and others and immense sadness for the tragedy that occurred in my community. What happened in Lewiston is not an isolated incident and gun violence is a reality across the United States. I believe that Maine can do better and pass legislation to protect all of its communities.

After dealing with feelings of grief and starting to heal as a community, I along with other Bates students became inspired to take action. We started a chapter of Students Demand Action at Bates, a club dedicated to the fight against gun violence in the United States. This is an issue I am passionate about because no more communities should have to face mass shootings again.

I urge you to please vote LD.2224 and LD.2238 “Ought to Pass.” Thank you for your time and consideration.

Ruby Paarlberg
Lewiston