

Shaun Donnelly  
Arundel

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary, my name is Shaun Donnelly, I live in Arundel, and I am testifying today in strong support LD 2238 “An Act to Address Gun Violence in Maine by Requiring a Waiting Period for Certain Firearm Purchases.”

I grew up in Maine, attending all but two of my primary school years in our state. I was a junior at Kennebunk High School when the shootings at Columbine took place. Thinking back on the fear and shock I felt then for the first time, compounded by a rash of bomb threats to my own school later that same year, I am dumbfounded that more has not been done in the 25 years since to protect Mainers from gun violence.

The vast majority of gun-related deaths in Maine are a result of suicide. Maine CDC reported to the HHS Committee last year that in 2020 and 2021, 87% of gun deaths in Maine were suicides. In those two years, 290 Mainers took their own lives by gun, compared to 36 homicides involving a firearm.<sup>1</sup> Across all methods, an average of 8.5% of suicide attempts result in death. When victims use a firearm, that rate jumps to 89.6%.<sup>2</sup>

I’ve lived all over Maine, including in the northwoods off Moosehead Lake, and I have grown up appreciating Mainers’ deep roots in hunting culture and understand that guns are an important tool. However I fail to see how a requirement to wait three days, less time than it takes most mail-order packages to be delivered, to take possession of a firearm unduly impedes lawful gun owners. At the same time, a study conducted by researchers at the University of Southern Mississippi found significant differences in suicide rates in states that delayed firearm deliveries than states that did not.<sup>3</sup>

We owe it to our fellow Mainers who we have lost to this horrible, ultimate act, and to their families and friends who have suffered from such unspeakable loss, to follow the science and do whatever we can to help prevent these deaths. If this measure saves the life of a single Mainer next year, it will have been worth it. Looking at the statistics, I expect that to be a conservative estimate. I strongly urge you to vote “ought to pass” on LD 2238, and thank you for your time and service to our beautiful state.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://legislature.maine.gov/doc/9742>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKBN1Y62FC/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5343707/>