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*29 Years of Full Practice Authority as Healthcare Providers for the People of Maine*

7 March 2024

Senator Anne Carney  
Representative Matt Moonen  
Members of the Committee on Judiciary  
Room 438  
Cross State Office Building, Augusta, Maine 04330

Dear Chairman Carney, Chairman Moonen and Members of the Committee:

I am writing today as a psychiatric nurse practitioner, independent medical examiner for the District Courts and member of the Legislative Committee of the Maine Nurse Practitioner Association in support of the spirit of LD2224, An Act to Strengthen Public Safety by Improving Maine's Firearm Laws and Mental Health System.

I have spent my entire career providing treatment for, and advocacy for, individuals with mental illness. This legislation would have police officers make the determination as to whether an individual has mental illness; it also entails the expectation that mental health professionals determine whether an individual is dangerous. One has only to read paragraph 5 to note how convoluted and prolonged the proposed process would be.

Of more import is the ongoing stigmatizing trope that dangerousness and criminal behavior is equated with the existence of mental illness. We have just learned that Robert Card suffered from traumatic brain injury, a neurological condition, which clearly can result in profoundly dangerous behavior. He did not carry a psychiatric diagnosis.

This problem will not be solved until dangerousness is recognized as resulting from a plethora of reasons far beyond mental illness. And this gun problem will not be solved until we are willing to disavow the stigmatizing mental illness trope.

Maine needs a red flag law, not a re-work of the current yellow flag law.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Constance W. Jordan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Constance W. Jordan, ANP, PMHNP  
Immediate Past President, Maine Nurse Practitioner Association  
Member, Legislative Committee, Maine Nurse Practitioner Association