



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Testimony of Rep. Bill Bridgeo in support of
**LD 2224, An Act to Strengthen Public Safety by Improving Maine's
Firearm Laws and Mental Health System**
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary

I was about 10 years old when, using paperboy money earned delivering the Bangor Daily News in Caribou, I bought my first gun – a beautiful Winchester .22 rifle. Throughout my life, I have owned rifles, shotguns and handguns. I enjoy quiet fall days in the woods bird hunting and one of these years my name will be drawn in the moose-hunting lottery. For the 24 years I was Augusta City Manager and Director of Public Safety, I participated in the police department's semi-annual firearms qualifications and became proficient with my Glock .40 caliber pistol.

I respect Maine's long tradition of responsible gun ownership and our constitutional (state and federal) rights to keep and bear arms. I also believe that all of the rights that we as citizens enjoy are bounded by the need for reasonable restrictions – that no right is completely unfettered.

The tragedy that took place last fall in Lewiston has shaken all of us and has caused Gov. Janet Mills and members of the Legislature to resolve to take steps to ensure that something like that will not happen again. Gov. Mills introduced [legislation](#) that I support that moves us in that direction. It recognizes the need to expand mental health treatment resources as well as expanded gun safety regulation.

Beyond the Governor's bill, I support legislation that others have introduced that would limit the magazine capacity of high-powered rifles (as currently exists in our hunting laws), create a three-day waiting period for gun purchases, prohibit the sale of bump stocks and upgrade Maine's "yellow flag" law to the type of red flag law in place in 21 other states around the country.

I realize that my positions on this issue will be very unpopular with some of my constituents, but I hope that folks will understand that these are issues that I have felt strongly about for many years and that - like other constitutional rights (free speech, assembly, privacy, search and seizure, etc.) - the right to keep and bear arms requires reasonable regulation for the safety of all of us.