



March 7, 2024

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary,

I join you today on behalf of the Maine Women's Lobby. For over forty years, the Maine Women's Lobby has worked to build gender justice in Maine through legislative advocacy and systems change.

We are here today **in support of LD 2238, Resolution, An Act to Address Gun Violence in Maine by Requiring a Waiting Period for Certain Firearm Purchases**, and thank Senator Rotundo for bringing forward this important bill.

Maine's lack of gun safety infrastructure — and its inevitable connection to suicide and homicide— is an issue of gender equity.

This bill would take important steps forward in reducing gun violence and gun deaths by imposing a waiting period between the purchase of a firearm and when the buyer can take possession of that gun. This mitigates the impulsive nature of some suicidal and homicidal acts.

Waiting periods are a proven way to reduce firearm suicides, with studies suggesting that implementing waiting periods may reduce firearm suicide by 7-11%.¹ Suicides represent more than 54% of all gun deaths among women— On average, more than 3,250 women die by firearm suicide each year.² And, the gun suicide rate is rising: a recent survey from the Maine CDC found that more than 25% of teen girls reported seriously considering suicide in the past year and more than 10% reported attempting suicide.

There is also evidence that **waiting periods may reduce gun homicides, which are the leading instrument in fatal domestic violence**.³ 40% women in Maine have experienced sexual violence, physical violence, and/or stalking by a partner at some point in their lifetime⁴—nearly as many as every person in Maine living north of Augusta. One in seven

¹ Michael Luca, Deepak Malhotra, and Christopher Poliquin, "Handgun Waiting Periods Reduce Gun Deaths," Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences 114, no. 46 (2017): 12162–12165.

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Wide-ranging Online Data for Epidemiologic Research Consideration (WONDER), "Underlying Cause of Death, 2018-2021, Bridged Race" <https://wonder.cdc.gov/ucd-icd10.html>

³ Michael Luca, Deepak Malhotra, and Christopher Poliquin, "Handgun Waiting Periods Reduce Gun Deaths," Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences 114, no. 46 (2017): 12162–12165.

⁴ Centers for Disease Control. (2013). National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey State Report: Maine. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/NISVS-StateReportBook.pdf>

women have experienced abuse with a firearm by an intimate partner⁵ and access to a gun makes it 5 times more likely that a woman will be killed by her abuser⁶. Black, Latina, and Indigenous women bear a disproportionate impact, with intimate partner firearm homicides at two or three times the rate of white women.⁷

We must recognize that violence and lack of gun safety laws, including a waiting period, is a gendered issue. We hope you will vote Ought to Pass.

Sincerely,

Lily Bohan James
Maine Women's Lobby

⁵ Everytown analysis of the National Violence Against Women Survey (Patricia Tjaden and Nancy Thoennes, "Full Report of the Prevalence, Incidence, and Consequences of Violence Against Women: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey," November 2000, <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/183781.pdf>) and US Census 2020.

⁶ Campbell, J. C., et al. (2003). "Risk factors for femicide in abusive relationships: results from a multisite case control study". American Journal of Public Health. (2003). <https://doi.org/10.2105/ajph.93.7.1089>

⁷ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Web-based Inquiry Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS), "WISQARS National Violent Death Reporting System, retrieved on 11/14/23 from <https://wisqarscdc.gov/nvdrs/>