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*Testimony of Representative Laurie Osher 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*

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen and esteemed members of the Judiciary Committee, I am Laurie Osher and I represent District 25, the majority of Orono. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of **LD 2224, An Act to Strengthen Public Safety by Improving Maine's Firearm Laws and Mental Health System**.

The events of last October have had permanent impacts on our state and it's citizens. From those who were directly affected by the mass shooting to others in every corner of our state who now know with certainty yes it can happen here.

Many gun safety proposals have come forward as a result of the shootings in Lewiston in October of 2023. I applaud the efforts of the legislators who have worked on these proposals. We also know that gun-related harm to Mainers; death, dismemberment and permanent disability caused by guns is not something that is new and citizens, advocates and legislators have been proposing bills with the goal of saving lives for years.

Nearly 90% of gun related deaths in Maine each year are successful suicide attempts. 7% of gun deaths are "domestic violence", meaning that a gun was used by an individual to kill their family member or members.

I am here today to speak in support of LD 2224 and to request that the committee create an amendment to improve it. LD 2224 seeks to protect our citizens and ensure individual rights are protected. While the bill is a strong foundation, I encourage the

committee to further strengthen the bill to improve its extreme risk protection order provisions. I urge the committee to amend the bill to create an additional pathway for families and law enforcement, using temporary orders to remove firearms when there is evidence that an individual poses a danger to themselves or others even when that individual has not been diagnosed with a mental illness. With that amendment, which has been outlined by Representative Cluchey and other speakers today, we can take timely action to prevent tragedies and save lives.

Allowing for a temporary order to remove a firearm from an individual in crisis, allows us to take quick action that can save lives. Further, by focusing on current behavior, requiring a high burden of proof for any petitioner seeking such a temporary order and requiring significant penalties for making false claims we can ensure that the proper balance of safeguarding individual rights and protecting the public can be met.

This addition to the legislation would provide a significant tool to help reduce gun-related harm that faces our communities and offer an option that does not require the need to place individuals in protective custody.

Thank you for your work on this vital issue to the people of Maine and I urge you to not only support LD 2224 but consider this common-sense amendment to the bill.