

Testimony in Support of LD 2224
“An Act to Strengthen Public Safety by Improving Maine’s Firearm Laws and Mental Health System”
and
Testimony in Support of LD 2238
“An Act to Address Gun Violence in Maine by Requiring a Waiting Period for Certain Firearm Purchases”

Good morning Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary. My name is Scott Harriman, I live in Lewiston, and I am testifying in support of LD 2224, “An Act to Strengthen Public Safety by Improving Maine’s Firearm Laws and Mental Health System” and LD 2238, “An Act to Address Gun Violence in Maine by Requiring a Waiting Period for Certain Firearm Purchases.”

I began this week by sitting in the Lewiston City Council Chambers and listening to testimony from many of the survivors of the shooting that took place in our city just over four months ago. Most mentioned how they were not the same people they were before. They mentioned the trauma that keeps them up at night and keeps them from being comfortable in public places. They talked about the number of good friends they had lost and about going to as many as seven funerals within the span of a week or two.

But the overarching theme was about how the system has failed us: “Why didn’t anyone do anything?” Despite clear warning signs about the shooter’s mental health, his intent to injure and kill, and his known access to weapons, why didn’t anyone do anything?

You may hear people say this is a mental health issue, not a gun issue. However, every country has people dealing with mental illness – only one country has repeated mass shootings on this scale. We need to do much more to improve our mental healthcare system, but it only makes sense to also strengthen our gun laws so that when people fall through the cracks they are less likely to cause the kind of carnage that these weapons allow. These two bills, along with others being considered, take sensible steps to protect our friends and loved ones.

We saw last October what just one person falling through the cracks, while also having unchecked access to guns, can do to my beloved city and to our entire state. Please vote **Ought To Pass** on LD 2224 and LD 2238. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Scott A. Harriman (he/him)
Lewiston, Maine
harriman.scott@gmail.com