



GUN OWNERS OF MAINE

DEFENDING GUN RIGHTS

LD 2238: An Act to Address Gun Violence in Maine by Requiring a Waiting Period for Certain Firearm Purchases

LD 2224: An Act to Strengthen Public Safety by Improving Maine's Firearm Laws and Mental Health System

Members of the Committee, my name is Laura Whitcomb, President of Gun Owners of Maine.

With regard to requiring a waiting period for the lawful purchase of a firearm, we oppose this dangerous legislation.

In summary, waiting periods jeopardize the lives of the law-abiding and will hurt small businesses in our state. Once a background check is passed, imposing an arbitrary waiting period could be the difference between life and death for someone looking to leave a domestic violence situation. Waiting periods would make it impossible for gun shows to continue in our state- a long-standing Maine tradition, and would shutter small businesses that depend on traveling patrons for their livelihood.

As it is worded now, Gun Owners of Maine will be opposing the Governor's Bill, LD 2224 in its entirety. We were hopeful, given its broad scope, that we would be able to support some of the Governor's proposals concerning access to mental health care and crisis centers, however, the current wording leaves an open door to a gun registry, which we oppose.

We do not feel that Maine's current law needs to be amended, but rather enforced, when it comes to our current community protection and weapons restriction orders, known to some as "Yellow Flag Laws". If the necessary funding is not in place to allow for the enforcement of current law, this is something that needs to be addressed at a budgetary level, rather than restricting the rights of Maine citizens.

The Governor's proposals around background checks and transfers are equally as concerning. Background checks have never been shown to decrease violent crime in any way. Further infringing on the rights of law-abiding Maine residents by expanding background checks in Maine cannot be enforced unless a gun ownership registry is formed. Furthermore, criminals who know they will not pass a background check will not submit to that process.

We oppose the addition of the term "recklessly" to current law surrounding firearms transfers. There are some people here today who believe any transfer of a firearm is reckless. The term is too subjective.

We oppose the expansion of background checks adamantly.

On behalf of our membership and the Gun Owners of Maine Board of Directors,

Laura Whitcomb, President
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