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"We are ready to take a bullet for your child". This was the response I got from the director of my daughter's preschool as I asked about active shooting protocols in the wake of Uvalde. There really shouldn't be anything more to say than that. That statement alone should make clear there is a huge problem. A teacher's job is to teach, not lay down their lives for their students. We need to value life by having laws that reflect this.

I was right around 8 weeks pregnant with my daughter when the Parkland shooting happened not too far from where I was living at the time. I remember thinking how absolutely devastating it is that those parents had lost their children and at the same time my child's life was just beginning. I hoped that by the time she reached school there would be legislation that would protect children in their schools.

As a parent, we do absolutely everything to protect our children but when it comes to guns I feel so helpless. I cannot give her the words to work through that type of situation as I would if she was having trouble making a new friend. I cannot equip her for that reality.

I implore you to place greater value on the lives of our children than guns. Please pass common sense gun laws that protect Mainers so our state does not have another Lewiston shooting. We know the devastation that a mass shooting causes. If we let that happen again how can we look our children in the eyes and tell them we did absolutely everything in our power to keep them safe. Please remember your constituents and their children when you legislate because no parent wants to lose a child to gun violence.

-Kristen O'Neill