



Supportive Testimony: LD 2238 “An Act to Address Gun Violence in Maine by Requiring a Waiting Period for Certain Firearm Purchase”

Good afternoon Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary. My name is Angela Leclerc, I am a Gorham resident and today I am testifying on behalf of the Maine Association of PAs (MEAPA) where I serve on the Board of Directors. MEAPA is testifying in support of LD 2238 “An Act to Address Gun Violence in Maine by Requiring a Waiting Period for Certain Firearm Purchase”.

I have been practicing as a PA for 19 years in Maine, all in acute care with most of my practice in critical care. Unfortunately, I have borne witness to many life-changing injuries and deaths related to firearms. These life-changing events, where patients are left permanently injured or dead, have been both accidental and intentional. They have been homicidal and suicidal. They have been elderly, middle-aged, young adults, and even children. I have had to tell parents, spouses, and children that their loved one is deceased or forever maimed.

When I was in high school, my friend struggled with mental health, unbeknownst to any of our friends and died by a self-inflicted gunshot wound. Another friend, a star football player and athlete, a standout student in all their AP classes, also died by self-inflicted gunshot wound. Two of my PA colleagues and two physician colleagues (and many more I didn't know) have died by self-inflicted gunshot wounds.

As you all know, Maine had its first mass casualty event in 2023, killing 18 Maine citizens- citizens that you represent-with an AR-10, the same weapon used to kill 58 people in Las Vegas. AR-15s were used in Buffalo, Uvalde, Highland Park, Sutherland Springs, Texas and Boulder, Colorado.

In 1789, when the second amendment was passed by Congress, the average number of musket balls that could be fired by a member of the militia was about two per minute. The Sandy Hook elementary school shooter subjected those small children and teachers to 154 bullets in less than 4 minutes, or about 38 bullets per minute from a semiautomatic rifle.

Mental health can cause transient but often serious disruptions in an individual's rationality, perceptions and often insight. Those struggling, should have more options, more safety nets to prevent them from rash decisions with life altering or life-ending results. Many mental health conditions can be treated with medications, psychotherapy, behavioral therapy-they are not hopeless cases-they are individuals asking, sometimes begging for help.



LD 2238 adds an important safety net to those suffering with mental health and our communities. A 72 hour wait period, hopefully coupled with the provisions of LD 2119 and LD 2086, will provide additional time for a struggling individual to receive care. We believe this inconvenience for responsible and mentally well gun owners are outweighed by saving lives of Mainers.

This bill is not the only answer; however, it is an important start. We need a multifaceted approach, one that includes stricter gun control laws and mental expansion of access to mental healthcare. We are not advocating for the elimination of personal gun ownership or use, instead we would like our focus to be on keeping guns out of the hands of those who are a danger to themselves and others. While we unfortunately cannot save everyone, this legislation will have a profound impact. When you look in the eyes of your son or daughter, brother or sister, friend, or colleague, know your position, report and vote on this type of legislation may directly impact their lives and possibly your own.

Thank you for your consideration and your work on this important issue. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

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