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TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF LD 2283, “An Act to Enact the Crisis Intervention Order Act to Protect the Safety of the Public”

To: Senator Anne Carney, Representative Matthew Moonen, and Members of the Committee on Judiciary.

I am a physician in Maine and a member of the Maine Association of Psychiatric Physicians and the Maine Medical Association. I am here to speak strongly in favor of LD 2283.

Gun violence is a major health challenge in the US, including constituting the number one cause of child mortality up to age 17¹ in our nation. Maine has a long history of gun use for hunting but also a less celebrated history of guns killing Mainers. Prior to the tragic events in Lewiston of last October, gun deaths have been running 9.9 deaths per 100,000 per year, and of those deaths 89% are suicides and 7% homicides.²

In an effort to reduce the growing impact of gun violence in Maine, a ‘yellow flag’ statute was enacted in 2020, an important step forward. However, more can be done. Speaking as a psychiatric physician with experience in community crisis and dangerousness assessment in Maine and elsewhere, we would do well to make use of the history and concern of family that can be extremely helpful. LD 2283 adds this perspective to the process and would be a major step towards addressing the growing issue of gun violence in our state.

I urge you to work for passage and enactment of LD 2283 for Maine. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Ed Pontius MD

¹
<https://www.kff.org/global-health-policy/issue-brief/child-and-teen-firearm-mortality-in-the-u-s-and-peer-countries/> accessed 31.03.24

²
<https://maps.everytownresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Every-State-Fact-Sheet-2.0-042720-Maine.pdf> accessed 31.03.24