

Chairpersons Carney and Moonen, and esteemed members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Robin Russel and I live in Hermon. I am a Professor at the University of Maine School of Social Work. And, I am testifying in strong support of LD 2283.

As you have probably heard, young college students are experiencing very high rates of anxiety and depression, twice that of previous cohorts of students. Undergraduate students in my classes have spoken in class about their fears of being shot..., not in their social work internships or jobs, but anywhere: at a concert, a movie theater, on campus, or other public spaces. The shootings in Lewiston this past fall seem to have elevated this fear. They feel helpless to protect themselves from mass shootings.

Research has shown that Extreme Risk or Red Flag laws have reduced gun deaths, including suicides, in states that have enacted them. In my field we teach our students that we should use evidence-based practices in our work with clients. I believe this should also be true in the policy arena. We know that Red Flag laws can make a difference in the plague of gun deaths we have in this country. I urge you to pass this law.

Robin Russel, JD, PhD