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LD 2283

Members of the Judiciary Committee,  
I am writing this testimony in support of LD 2283, True Extreme Risk Protection Order (True ERPO).

True Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPO) empower family members and law enforcement to petition a judge to temporarily remove firearms from an individual who poses a risk of harming themselves or others. ERPO laws are currently in effect in 21 states and the District of Columbia and research demonstrates that ERPOs can be effective in preventing suicide and homicide. ERPO laws can save lives.

It is important to note that Extreme Risk Protection Orders are temporary (usually 14 days), civil not criminal laws, and are based on dangerous behavior not mental illness.

Most people who are mentally ill are not more likely to commit acts of violence. And people who are at an elevated risk of committing acts of violence or self-harm are not necessarily mentally ill. With that in mind, it is critical, when looking to prevent tragedies, that we focus on behavior and not necessarily a mental health diagnosis. By identifying dangerous behavior we can more effectively identify people who are at risk.

Since the Lewiston shooting there has been a large increase in the use of the Yellow Flag Law which demonstrate just how many Mainers need help and also how desperate the need is for their friends, family and local law enforcement officials to have more tools to separate those Mainers in crisis from guns and prevent tragedies before they happen.

The tragedy in Lewiston, combined with the 150+ firearms suicides in Maine every year and the countless other acts of gun violence that take place in Maine, show how critical it is to give our law enforcement personnel more tools to keep us safe and families more tools to get their loves ones help.

ERPO will not eliminate all gun violence in Maine but it is one legal element in a toolkit of life-saving policies that will save lives.

I urge your support for LD 2283, the True Extreme Risk Protection Order.