

Dear Speaker Talbot Ross, Senator Vitelli, Representative Cloutier, Representative Terry, Senator Daughtry, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary.

My name is Emily Follo, and I am a Family Medicine physician and public health professional in Portland, Maine.

This testimony is in support of LD 2283 - An Act to Enact the Crisis Intervention Order Act to Protect the Safety of the Public.

Violence due to firearms in the U.S. is increasingly becoming a public health concern as the number of lives lost - and traumatized - rises at an alarming rate. The intersection between mental health crises and firearm access is dangerous, both to those experiencing crisis and those around them. This true extreme risk protection order allows for rapid intervention when someone poses a risk to themselves or others, without delay. In these critical situations, the first priority should be safety. Importantly, this will have a positive effect on suicide prevention. Maine's suicide rate is higher than the national average and has risen over the past 20 years. Data from the most deadly mass shootings in the U.S. indicate suicidality was at play in many cases. While this certainly indicates a need for mental health support, a long-term goal and slow-moving process, action must be taken now to save lives. Preventing firearm deaths requires more than one approach. This bill is a critical protection for the people of Maine, without infringing on the rights of the average gun owner. I urge you to vote ought to pass on LD 2283.

Thank you very much for your consideration and your work on this important topic.