



April 5, 2024

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary,

I join you today on behalf of the Maine Women's Lobby. For over forty years, the Maine Women's Lobby has worked to build gender justice in Maine through legislative advocacy and systems change.

We are here today **in support of LD 2283, An Act to Enact the Crisis Intervention Order Act to Protect the Safety of the Public**, and thank Speaker Talbot Ross for bringing forward this important bill.

Below is the testimony we submitted in support of **LD 2224, An Act to Strengthen Public Safety by Improving Maine's Firearm Laws and Mental Health System**. We stand by this testimony and continue to advocate for a legal path to intervention when a person shows signs of being a risk to themselves or a risk to others.

LD 2283 embodies the spirit of a true Extreme Risk Protection Order law, and we encourage the committee to vote Ought To Pass.

Research suggests that there are warning signs observable to others before most acts of violence.¹ When a person is considering harming themselves or others, family members and law enforcement often recognize clear warning signs. Extreme risk laws empower these individuals to intervene so that someone in crisis can temporarily be prevented from accessing firearms. There is growing research demonstrating the ability for these gun safety laws to prevent many types of firearm violence, including suicides and other instances of gun violence.

Gun violence is a highly gendered issue, and women and gender minorities bear a disproportionate burden of that violence - especially in the context of this bill, which would address the intersection of gun violence and mental health. For example, more than 3,250 women die by firearm suicide each year.² Suicides represent more than 54% of all gun deaths among women - a rate that is rising - and these deaths disproportionately affect women of

¹ Robert Golden, Fred Peterson, and Carla Weiland. The truth about illness and disease. Infobase Publishing 2009.

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Wide-ranging Online Data for Epidemiologic Research Consideration (WONDER), "Underlying Cause of Death, 2018-2021, Bridged Race"
<https://wonder.cdc.gov/ucd-icd10.html>

color.³ A survey from the CDC found that more than 25% of teen girls reported seriously considering suicide in the past year and more than 10% reported attempting suicide.⁴ This bill would create a clearer pathway for intervention, and potentially address these specific types of circumstances.

Maine’s lack of gun safety infrastructure is a gendered issue, and this proposal will have a positive and powerful effect on gender equity, especially on those women who are most historically excluded and marginalized. We hope you will vote Ought to Pass.

Sincerely,

Destie Hohman Sprague
Maine Women’s Lobby

³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Wide-ranging Online Data for Epidemiologic Research Consideration (WONDER), “Underlying Cause of Death, 2018-2021, Bridged Race”
<https://wonder.cdc.gov/ucd-icd10.html>

⁴ “Youth Risk Behavior Survey: Data Summary & Trends Report, 2011-2021,” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for HIV, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention, February 2023, Retrieved on 11/15/23 from
https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/pdf/yrbs_data-summary-trends_report2023_508.pdf