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LD 2283

As a mother, resident of Maine, and epidemiologist with 20 years of experience, I support the implementation of a true Extreme Risk Protection Order (ERPO) policy, otherwise known as a “Red Flag” or “Crisis Intervention Order” law, because it will save lives.

This type of policy enables law enforcement, family members and others to go through the court to temporarily remove firearms from people who pose a danger to themselves or others in the community. It’s a more straightforward process than Maine’s Yellow Flag Law.

According to The Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions, data show that, when implemented effectively, ERPO laws can save lives. Twenty-one states, including Vermont, Connecticut and Massachusetts, and Washington D.C. have enacted ERPO laws. The time for Maine to join these ranks is now.

Data suggest this policy is effective at reducing firearm suicides. Connecticut and Indiana were the first two states to enact ERPO laws, in 1999 and 2005, respectively. A recent (2018) study evaluated the laws in these two states and found, overall, that firearm seizure legislation was associated with reductions in state-level firearm suicide rates. In Indiana, the legislation was associated with a 7.5% decrease in firearm suicides in the first decade post-enactment (383 firearm suicides prevented). In Connecticut, while the law was enacted in 1999, it was not enforced until 2007 (after the Virginia Tech shooting). Thus, while the legislation was associated with only a 1.6% reduction in firearm suicides, the reduction increased to 13.7% following increased enforcement of the law (preventing 128 firearm suicides).

Gun violence is not inevitable. It can be prevented through a comprehensive public health approach that keeps families and communities safe, while respecting responsible gun owners. As such, we support this policy.

I respectfully request you to vote LD 2283 “Ought to Pass.” Thank you for your consideration.