



Committee on Judiciary

**LD 2283** - *An Act to Enact the Crisis Intervention Order Act to Protect the Safety of the Public*

April 5, 2024

Respected Members of the Judiciary Committees, my name is Gia Drew. I am the Executive Director of EqualityMaine, which has been representing and advocating for Maine's LGBTQ+ community since 1984, and I am testifying today on behalf of EqualityMaine in support of **LD 2283**. We strongly believe that there is no single solution to stopping gun violence in Maine, which has the highest gun death rate in New England, and that a comprehensive approach including a true extreme risk protection order is long overdue.

It is vital to note that serious mental illness is not by itself a predictor of violence. Only 3-5% of violence is committed by people with mental health disabilities and less than 5% of gun-related deaths in the U.S. are committed by people with mental health disabilities. In fact, people with severe mental illnesses are over 10 times more likely to be victims of a violent crime than the general population.<sup>1</sup>

LGBTQ+ people are more than two times as likely to be victims of gun violence than their straight and cisgender peers.<sup>2</sup> Since 2013, nearly two-thirds of fatal violence toward transgender and gender-nonconforming people involved a gun; the majority of those victims were black women under the age of 30.<sup>3</sup> The LGBTQ+ community is also disproportionately impacted by suicide, in no small part due to the stigma, discrimination, and bias that are on the rise around the country. The combination of a lack of adequate laws to prevent gun violence and animosity towards the LGBTQ+ community had led to the loss of lives as well as immense harm and trauma caused by violence.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.bazelon.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/2-3-2020-DebunkingTheMyths\\_Follow\\_up\\_Materials.pdf](http://www.bazelon.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/2-3-2020-DebunkingTheMyths_Follow_up_Materials.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Kyliewatz. "Facts and Statistics About the Impact of Gun Violence on LGBTQ+ People." *Sandy Hook Promise*, 19 Feb. 2024, [www.sandyhookpromise.org/blog/news/facts-and-statistics-about-the-impact-of-gun-violence-on-lgbtq-people/](http://www.sandyhookpromise.org/blog/news/facts-and-statistics-about-the-impact-of-gun-violence-on-lgbtq-people/).

<sup>3</sup> "Gun Violence Prevention." *Human Rights Campaign*, [www.hrc.org/resources/gun-violence-prevention](http://www.hrc.org/resources/gun-violence-prevention).

Giving family members, who are often the first people to notice that their loved one needs help, a process that makes it easier for them to get dangerous weapons away from someone who is a threat to themselves or others is a critical violence prevention tool.

We urge you to support this bill, and to vote Ought To Pass.

Thank you,

Gia Drew (she/her)  
EqualityMaine