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Portland
LD 1109

Esteemed Committee Chairwomen and Members,

I am writing to urge you to pass LD 637 and LD 1109. I was fortunate to grow up before gun violence became rampant in our country. As a college student, I was held up twice at gunpoint. That made me become interested in the issue of gun violence and access to guns, and I have paid attention to it for nearly 50 years.

My children grew up with lockdowns as a regular part of their school experience. I worked at the Portland Public Schools' Central Office at the time. They would call me to ask, "Mom, is this real?" Usually, it was just a hoax, but a couple of scary experiences took place during their school years.

The use of guns in crimes has exploded in recent years- nationwide and right in my neighborhood. Just a few blocks from my home, a man recently brandished an assault weapon at a restaurant. A woman was killed at a bar down the street.

I teach at a school that just had its first active shooter drill for staff. We should have had that training years ago. Still, it is very disturbing to walk through the steps of how to respond should such an incident happen.

I attend a place of worship that has faced several threats in recent years. I now have to pay a surcharge on my dues because of the cost of having security guards there to protect us.

One advantage of being 70 years old is seeing things with a certain perspective. This is not how things used to be, and it is not how life should be. In 2004, I worked hard, along with others, for renewal of the federal assault weapons ban- but alas, it failed. We have seen the consequences of that failure.

I ask you to do everything you can in your power to limit access to weapons of mass destruction that have no place in private hands.