

Testimony on April 16, 2025

My name is ELLEN SHAVER

I live in Brunswick and I strongly oppose LD 208 because we need a 72-hour waiting period to save lives.

A shockingly high number of deaths (90%) by gun in Maine are suicides. That compares to the national average of 59% of gun deaths being suicides. Studies show that many of those deaths occur on impulse, as do many homicides and mass killings. A cooling-off period can prevent people from acting on such a deadly impulse.

A 72-hour waiting period may save other families from suffering a tragic loss like my family did when my grandnephew died by suicide.

Hans was a 22-year old senior at Connecticut College, home for the Christmas break. The previous summer he had spent an internship at a farm in Vermont learning about and practicing sustainable agriculture, which he planned on making his career. He was preparing to begin interviewing. He was close with his parents and sister and his long-time girlfriend. They had enjoyed a good Christmas.

Then on the evening of December 30, Hans went out briefly. He returned home and went to his room. A short while later his parents heard a shot, and his father found him dying on his bed from a self-inflicted gunshot wound. He was not on drugs. He was not mentally ill. He was not suffering from a broken relationship. He was well liked by his peers. We will never understand why it happened.

He passed the reference check and purchased the gun in half an hour - just 30 minutes! He left notes to his parents, sister and girlfriend saying he loved them, and it had nothing to do with them. Whatever impulse caused him to buy a gun, if there had been a 72-hour waiting period before he could take possession of the gun, we are convinced he would still be alive and would be making this world a better place with his dedication to caring for the earth.

The 72-hour waiting period will help prevent impulsive fatal decisions. I urge you to cast a life-saving vote. LD 208 ought not to pass.

Thank you for your time and attention.