



April 16th, 2025

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn 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 opposition of LD 208, LD 1230, and LD 1062, and other attempts to roll back the critical progress on gun safety legislation that the Legislature passed last session.

Gun violence is a highly gendered issue, and women and gender minorities bear a disproportionate burden of that violence.

Waiting periods are a proven way to reduce firearm suicides, with studies suggesting that implementing waiting periods may reduce firearm suicide by 7-11%.¹ Suicides represent more than 54% of all gun deaths among women— On average, more than 3,250 women die by firearm suicide each year.² And, the gun suicide rate is rising: a recent survey from the Maine CDC found that more than 25% of teen girls reported seriously considering suicide in the past year and more than 10% reported attempting suicide.

Additionally, waiting periods and background checks can help prevent fatal domestic violence.³ 40% women in Maine have experienced sexual violence, physical violence, and/or stalking by a partner at some point in their lifetime⁴—nearly as many as every person in Maine living north of Augusta. One in seven women have experienced abuse with a firearm by an intimate partner⁵ and access to a gun makes it 5 times more likely that a woman will be killed by her abuser⁶. Black, Latina, and Indigenous women bear a disproportionate impact, with intimate partner firearm

¹ Michael Luca, Deepak Malhotra, and Christopher Poliquin, "Handgun Waiting Periods Reduce Gun Deaths," Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences 114, no. 46 (2017): 12162–12165.

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>

³ Michael Luca, Deepak Malhotra, and Christopher Poliquin, "Handgun Waiting Periods Reduce Gun Deaths," Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences 114, no. 46 (2017): 12162–12165.

⁴ Centers for Disease Control. (2013). National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey State Report: Maine. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/NISVS-StateReportBook.pdf>

⁵ Everytown analysis of the National Violence Against Women Survey (Patricia Tjaden and Nancy Thoennes, "Full Report of the Prevalence, Incidence, and Consequences of Violence Against Women: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey," November 2000, <https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/nij/183781.pdf>) and US Census 2020.

⁶ Campbell, J. C., et al. (2003). "Risk factors for femicide in abusive relationships: results from a multisite case control study". American Journal of Public Health. (2003). <https://doi.org/10.2105/ajph.93.7.1089>

homicides at two or three times the rate of white women.⁷ Women with disabilities are also more likely to experience domestic violence and homicide is the leading cause of death for pregnant and postpartum people, with firearms involved in 70% of those deaths.⁸

Gun safety is a gendered issue, and the laws passed last session were critical steps forward in addressing gendered gun violence, especially women who are most historically excluded and marginalized. We hope you will vote Ought Not to Pass on attempts to roll back progress.

Sincerely,
Destie Hohman Sprague
Executive Director

⁷ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Web-based Inquiry Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS), "WISQARS National Violent Death Reporting System, retrieved on 11/14/23 from <https://wisqarscdc.gov/nvdrs/>

⁸ Breiding MJ, Armour BS. The association between disability and intimate partner violence in the United States. *Ann Epidemiol.* 2015 Jun;25(6):455-7. doi: 10.1016/j.annepidem.2015.03.017. Epub 2015 Mar 31. PMID: 25976023; PMCID: PMC4692458.