

Susan Townsley
Kennebunkport
LD 208

I am the Rev. Susan Townsley pastor South Congregational Church in Kennebunkport, where gun safety is one of our top priorities for serving our neighbors. I represent a church that is opposed to LD 208 to repeal the 72 hour waiting period.

Notice that those who are in favor of this bill wear buttons saying "gun rights are human rights." I point this out because it's just another way in which the gun lobby uses the bastardization of language to convince its members and others that they are on the side of good. Human rights are an international standard, see <https://www.ohchr.org/en/universal-declaration-of-human-rights> In fact, the right to own a gun makes Americans an outlier, but the right to security of person would suggest that our responsibility to pursue that which makes for the greatest likelihood of security. Owning a gun subjects to greatly reduced likelihood of personal security (<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2016/02/160202090811.htm>).

Don't let my neighbors fool you when they tell you the three stories about how a 72 hour waiting put some vulnerable woman in danger. In fact, all studies show that the 72 hour waiting period highly effective at reducing suicide (<https://med.stanford.edu/news/all-news/2020/06/handgun-ownership-associated-with-much-higher-suicide-risk.html>). And it is white men, who are most vulnerable to suicide. Ironically the very people who show up in numbers to defend their gun rights are either willfully blind or hook-winked about their risks. The gun lobby does not want people informed, educated or safe.

Gun safety is a public health issue. Like car accidents. And when we required seatbelts, which saved millions of lives, we heard the same stories brought out about the one or two people who were saved by being thrown from his car. Still, the evidence showed and still shows that seatbeats where an overwhelming risk reduction.

The 72 hour waiting period reduces harm. Do not pass a bill that repeals it.
Thank you.