



Maine Gun Safety Coalition Testimony in SUPPORT of LD 1379: An Act to Require Public Health Warnings to Be Posted and Provided by Firearm Dealers and Gunsmiths

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and esteemed members of the committee, my name is Nacole Palmer. I live in Bowdoin, and I serve as the executive director of the Maine Gun Safety Coalition.

I respectfully urge you to vote Ought To Pass on LD 1379. With a minimal price for the state and no cost for businesses that deal in firearms, the proposed public health warnings will help educate the public and save lives in Maine. In recent years, firearms have become the leading cause of death for children and teens nationwide. Any other product with even a fraction of the number of deaths attributed to it is legally required to have prominently displayed warnings on its packaging. A single 11x17 poster in each shop and a free brochure provided to customers is but a small ask of firearms dealers to educate firearms purchasers about the full scope of the products they are bringing into their home and the care they should take in using and storing it securely.

The proposed materials will educate firearm purchasers - many of whom may be purchasing a weapon for the first time - on best practices for storing their new gun. While storing firearms locked and unloaded may seem like common sense to many, some gun owners do not know the importance of these practices. 15% of households that contain both children and firearms store at least one gun loaded and unlocked.¹ Even in households where firearm-owning parents believed their guns were inaccessible to their children, many adolescents reported that they had been able to handle them without their parents' knowledge in less than five minutes.² The overwhelming majority of firearms that take the lives of young people across the country are taken from the homes of the shooters' families or relatives.³ A free brochure included with each firearm that clearly instructs new owners on how to store their gun properly will help keep them out of the hands of children, and in turn save lives—a value we Mainers share.

Please vote Ought To Pass on this simple, cost-effective, and life-saving legislation.

¹ 'Firearm Storage in US Households With Children - Findings From the 2021 National Firearm Survey', JAMA Network, <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2789269>

² Carmel Salhi, Deborah Azrael, Matthew Miller, "Parent and Adolescent Reports of Adolescent Access to Household Firearms in the United States," JAMA Network Open, (2021).

³ "The Gun is Not in the Closet," The Washington Post, August 1, 2018, <https://wapo.st/2M2HSH6>