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LD 1378

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and esteemed members of the committee. My name is Dr. Eric Dombroski, and I live in Auburn. I work as a pediatrician just down the road from where the Lewiston mass shooting was. I respectfully testify in support of LD 1378: An Act to Protect Maine Communities by Enacting the Extreme Risk Protection Order Act.

The Safe Schools Safe Communities initiative will save lives and help keep our kids, families, and communities safer.

Extreme Risk Protection Orders will allow both families and law enforcement to petition a court to temporarily restrict someone's access to dangerous weapons when they're in crisis.

Family members are often the first to know when a loved one is in crisis and potentially poses a threat to themselves or others. Empowering them to take action, through a court, will help save lives and prevent future tragedies.

Maine's current law is ineffective and failed to prevent the tragedy in Lewiston.

The report by the Lewiston Commission was clear that Maine's "yellow flag law" is cumbersome, weak, ineffective, and failed, despite multiple people close to the shooter reporting that he was in crisis.

Our current law disempowers family members by not allowing them to take direct action

when a loved one is in crisis and poses a threat to themselves or others. If they're able to get help, it too often comes too late.

We must all come together to support this common sense proposal to close the loopholes in our current laws that have led to tragic loss of life and devastated families and communities.

Firearms are now the leading cause of death for American children and teens. Other states have used these laws to disarm people who threatened school shootings. We must take every step we can to protect our children.

These types of laws are also effective in reducing incidents of suicide – the leading cause of firearm death in Maine, especially among men. Allowing a family member to petition for temporary removal of a gun from a person in crisis is not only compassionate but will save lives.

Key Facts:

- ERPOs empower family members to go directly to a court when a loved one is in crisis. Law enforcement officers will also still be able to initiate an ERPO.
- ERPOs have been used effectively to disarm people who threatened mass shootings, including school shootings

- ERPOs have been proven to reduce suicide, the leading cause of gun death in Maine, particularly among men.

- Maine's current law is not an Extreme Risk Protection Order law – it is the only law of

its kind in the nation, disempowers family members from getting help and preventing tragedies, and failed to prevent the tragedy in Lewiston.

- The ERPO ballot measure preserves identical due process protections to Maine's current law – any claim to the contrary is simply false.

- 21 other states (<https://everytownresearch.org/rankings/law/extreme-risk-law/>) and Washington, D.C. have ERPO laws, which have been upheld in court when

challenged, and the Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of these types of laws (United States v. Rahimi).

- Northeastern states that have ERPOs include Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island.