

Ian Lynch
Waterville
LD 1378

Rev. Ian Lynch
Waterville, Maine
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Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and esteemed members of the committee. My name is Ian Lynch, and I live in Waterville, where I am pastor of First Congregational Church, United Church of Christ. I respectfully testify in support of LD 1378: An Act to Protect Maine Communities by Enacting the Extreme Risk Protection Order Act.

Without question, the most painful day of my professional life was the day when one of my parishioners caused the death of her toddler through a tragic accident. No one should ever experience the extreme grief mixed with guilt that I was witness to that day. No one who encountered that tragedy, whether family, friend, or simply a member of the community, was the same after. The cause in that case was vehicular, but the same sort of unimaginable suffering could have been the result of a person who should not have been in possession of a gun.

No one with a shred of human kindness would wish this sort of pain on another and if there were some simple act that could be done to prevent it, who would not perform it?

You have the opportunity today to perform such a simple act. By simply allowing families to initiate a process to restrict a person they know and love from access to means to commit a heinous act, you can prevent potential horror for innocent victims' loved ones.

Personally, I have chosen not to own a gun, but I would never expect that my choices should be universally enforced. Clearly, there is a constitutional right to bear arms. This law would not violate that right, as evidenced by the existence of multiple laws across the country that have withstood court challenges, including the Supreme Court. Just as I understand that I don't have an unlimited right to drive a vehicle at any speed I choose because that presents a risk to the life and safety of others, so, too, reasonable limitations on second amendment rights are both legal and ethical.

I am grateful for the opportunity to share my perspective with the Committee. I urge you to vote "Ought to Pass" on this bill. Thank you!