



Maine Education Association
Jesse Hargrove **President** | Beth French **Vice President** | Jaye Rich **Treasurer**
Rebecca Cole **NEA Director** | Rachelle Bristol **Executive Director**

Testimony

In Support

LDs 1378 - An Act to Protect Maine Communities by Enacting the Extreme Risk Protection Order Act

Jesse Hargrove, President, Maine Education Association

Before the Judicial Committee

June 11, 2025

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee, My name is Jesse Hargrove, I am a high school social studies teacher on leave serving as President of the Maine Education Association and our 24,000 members ranging from pre-k through higher education. I write in support of LD 1378 - An Act to Protect Maine Communities by Enacting the Extreme Risk Protection Order Act. I first graduated from the University of Maine in 2001 with a Double Major in History and Political Science, and minor in Economics. I pursued a Masters in the Art of Teaching from Lewis & Clark College in Portland, Oregon. I returned home and began my career as an Educator of Students with Special Needs. I continued my education through University of Maine for Full Certification in this area and for a Certificate of Advanced Studies in Curriculum, Assessment, and Instruction. I have taken A LOT of education courses, participated in hundreds of workshops, and dozens of conferences, locally, statewide and nationally, covering a wide variety of pedagogical matters. However, there is no training to adequately prepare and educator for the death of a student, especially by suicide. I have been to 7 funerals due to gun related teenage deaths over my 22 years in the classroom. I wish I could give each one of those kids, that's what they were, one more day. Each of their families one more day. I don't know if other professions, outside of healthcare, emergency services, and the military, experience the sense of personal loss from tragedies like these, however educators should be meeting families at parent teacher conferences, athletic contests, and theatrical performances, not consoling them at funerals. This bill gives those kids and those families the opportunity for one more day.

The Maine Education Association Representative Assembly comprising of over 120 delegates from across the state passed a Legislative Platform position supporting Common-sense gun safety measures that include universal background checks, waiting periods for all gun purchases in the wake of the Lewiston shooting. The Non-Partisan USAFacts compiled Centers for Disease Control Data to conclude that, between 1979 and 2023, Maine had a 2 % higher rate of gun death than the national rate, at 14 deaths per 1000 people. This is a higher rate than deaths from motor vehicle accidents (10.9 per 100K people)ⁱ. According to Johns Hopkins University, Maine had the 24th highest gun suicide rate in the nation and firearms were the second leading cause of death among Maine children and teens in 2022ⁱⁱ. Nationwide, firearms were the leading cause of youth death for the years 2019-2023, the most recent year data was available. The rate of youth death by firearm triples the rate of death by drowningⁱⁱⁱ.

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The concern for potential gun violence is always at the back of the minds of our educators. Our state's educators and students are being trained to respond to active shooters. At worst, following news of yet another mass shooting, whether here or elsewhere, that concern is hard to push to the back of our minds. If a student has been impacted by gun violence—whether as someone who witnessed a tragedy, or as a victim, or had taken their own life—it is hard for an educator to ever put the concern aside. The concern for our students, for all students, for all educators, as well as for our communities.

Twenty-one states along with Washington, D.C., have now enacted laws such as what is proposed in LD 1378. There is evidence that such laws have reduced the risk of suicides and prevented incidents of mass shootings.^{iv}

Our students, our educators, and our communities deserve to be as safe as possible, and our legislators can enact measures to make that happen.

ⁱ “How Many people die from gun-related injuries in Maine each year?” USAFacts updated March 11, 2025; Accessed April 15, 2025. How many people die from gun-related injuries in Maine each year? | USAFacts

ⁱⁱ “Annual Gun Violence Data: Gun Violence in the United States 2022: Examining the Burden Among Children and Teens”. Center for Gun Violence Solutions, Johns Hopkins University Bloomberg School of Public Health accessed April 15, 2025: [State Data: Maine | Center for Gun Violence Solutions](#)

ⁱⁱⁱ Hernandez, Amanda “Youth gun deaths in the US have surged 50% since 2019”, Stateline updated April 9, 2025. Accessed April 15, 2025 Youth gun deaths in the US have surged 50% since 2019 • Stateline

^{iv} “[Extreme Risk Laws Saves Lives](#)”, Everytown For Gun Safety updated May 1, 2025, Accessed June 10, 2025