



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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***Testimony of Representative Margaret Craven introducing
LD 60, An Act to Require a 72-hour Waiting Period After the Sale of a Firearm
Before the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee***

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Salisbury and honorable members of the Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety, my name is Margaret Craven, and I represent House District 93, which includes part of Lewiston. I am here today to present **LD 60, An Act to Require a 72-hour Waiting Period After the Sale of a Firearm.**

Last session, we passed a bill that requires the Maine CDC to keep track of the incidences of injury and deaths from firearms in the state.

In 2020, there were 154 deaths in Maine from firearms, 132 of which were suicides and the majority of those deaths were young men. These numbers come from the 2020 CDC report, which is included with my testimony, and I anticipate data for 2022 to be available soon.

In 2007, I sponsored a bill for a young mother who was heartbroken after her 18-year-old son committed suicide. He had walked into Wal-Mart, bought a gun and ammunition, went straight home and then shot himself. She told me that all she could think about was that if she or other members of the family had any indication of his despair, then they would have been able to intervene. Suicides by firearm will continue as long as people in crisis have easy access to firearms.

The following excerpt comes from “The Case for Handgun Waiting Periods,” which was coauthored by three social scientists.

More than 33,000 people in the United States die from gun-related injuries each year, making firearms the second leading cause of injury-related death... Our recent empirical research shows that *handgun waiting periods* that delay gun purchases (typically by a few days) lead to large reductions in gun violence.¹

Gun violence is an epidemic. According to the American Psychiatric Association, an overwhelming 87% of Americans think gun violence is a public health threat². In 2016, the American Medical Association, our country’s largest physicians’ group, adopted a formal policy calling gun violence a public health crisis.³

We all know that the human brain does not mature until well into a person's 20s. Young people, especially when experiencing despair or hopelessness, are impetuous and don't have the maturity to make good decisions.

Behaviorally-informed gun policy has the potential to reduce violence without imposing new restrictions on anyone's right to own a gun. Waiting periods are effective, and they are also supported by a majority of Americans and roughly 50% of gun owners. Waiting periods do not restrict gun ownership, but they do create a window of time in which someone in crisis could get the help they need.

Thank you for your time. I am happy to answer any questions you have for me.

1. <https://behavioralscientist.org/the-case-for-handgun-waiting-periods/>
2. <https://www.psychiatry.org/newsroom/news-releases/americans-overwhelmingly-see-gun-violence-as-a-public-health-issue-they-want-congress-to-act-and-cdc-to-conduct-research>
3. <https://www.ama-assn.org/press-center/press-releases/ama-calls-gun-violence-public-health-crisis>