

Dear Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Salisbury and members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee. I am Margo Donnis from South Portland.

We often hear people say - 'Guns don't kill people, criminals kill people.' Or 'Guns don't kill people, mentally troubled people kill people.'

Given this, can we do more to prevent criminals or mentally troubled people from getting guns? Yes we can. Yes we must.

Firearm buyers know about Maine's lax background checks. They are coming here from New York (where my niece and her fiancé live) and Pennsylvania (where my nephew and niece and their spouses live) and Massachusetts (where my two sisters and their families live). After buying firearms privately with no background checks, they are taking the firearms back home and selling them privately. And, any of those guns may threaten my relatives in those states.

As to my friends and my neighbors?

My friend is married to a policeman. A criminal - via a private firearm sale - can get a firearm and threaten him.

My neighborhood elementary school may be threatened by a mentally troubled individual with a firearm.

I dread getting a call from a family member or a friend who have lost a spouse or child or grandchild to a disturbed individual who bought a gun in a Maine private sale. I fear reading the local news every day, as I may hear that a Maine school shooting has occurred.

Mainers have lax firearm background checks in our laws. We must shut the door to this loophole that is giving criminals and disturbed individuals access to firearms.

I'm lucky today. Tonight I can sleep because my family and friends and neighbors are whole. I worry that this can be shattered in one moment of unspeakable madness for which I know Maine lax gun laws are partly to blame.

Please. Support this law. Our families and friends and neighbors have a right to life. We rely on you to protect us from violence.