



**Testimony before the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Safety –**

**LD 60, HP0035 - An Act to Require a 72-hour Waiting Period After the Sale of a Firearm**

Thank you Senator Beebe Center and Representative Salisbury and Esteemed Members of the Committee for allowing me to testify *in support* of LD 60 *An Act to Require a 72-hour Waiting Period After the Sale of a Firearm*.

My name is Kathleen McFadden and I am Resident of Gouldsboro, Maine and a volunteer with Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America, the largest grassroots organization dedicated to protecting our communities, families, and children from gun violence in all its various forms including mass shootings, homicide, unintentional deaths, and suicide by firearms. Moms Demand Action has over 10 million supporters Nationwide and since the most recent school shooting we have welcomed over 100 new supporters in Maine and nearly 20,000 Nationwide. This clearly demonstrates that Americans are fed up with lawmakers who bow to the gun lobby and put the 2nd amendment above the lives of 2nd graders. Our founding fathers promised life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness to all Americans, and they would be appalled and ashamed of the gun lobby's hijacking of the 2nd Amendment for profit and political power on the backs and lives of our children.

I am one of the 2 in 10, not 2 in 100 or 2 in one thousand, but 2 in 10 Americans who have been impacted by gun violence. I bear witness to the lifelong aftermath, repercussions, and trauma that gun violence wreaks on families and communities. It is a horror, I wish on no-one.

Gun violence is a public health crisis and is now the leading cause of death among children in this country.

- In Maine the rate of gun suicide has increased 45% from 2012 to 2021 compare to a 19% change nationwide.
- In Maine, the overwhelming majority of gun deaths (89%) are suicides. An average of 145 people die by gun suicide each year across the state - one person every 60 hours.
- From 2016 to 2020, more than 140 veterans dies by gun suicide in Maine, an average of nearly 30 per year. Veteran Suicide is on the rise in Maine and we owe it to them and every resident of our great state to do all that we can to support and help them in times of crisis.

This bill would provide a 72 hour waiting period to give a person experiencing a suicidal crisis a grace period to reconsider. When someone is in crisis, days matter - creating a buffer between the purchase and possession of a firearm can be the difference between life and death. Policies that create this buffer are associated with lower firearm suicide rates. When we talk about suicide we know that means matter. Most people who attempt suicide do not die—unless they use a gun.

Across all suicide attempts without a gun, only 4% result in death. But when a gun is involved, that figure skyrockets to 90%. The vast majority of people who survive a suicide attempt do not go on to die from a later attempt. The research shows that the difference between living to see a better day or dying by suicide is often determined by the presence of a gun and suicidal impulse. Given the unique lethality of firearms as a means of suicide, addressing gun suicide is an essential element of any strategy to reduce gun violence in this country. LD 60 would create a buffer to help prevent impulsive acts of suicide and homicide by requiring a waiting and "cooling off" period of 72 hours before the sale of any firearm may be completed. Veteran Suicide is on the rise in Maine and we owe it to them and every resident of our great state to do all that we can to support and help them in times of crisis.

We know it takes courage, leadership and political will to change the trajectory of gun violence in every form in this country. I respectfully ask the committee to vote "ought to pass" Thank you for your time.