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Testimony of Representative Suzanne Salisbury in support of
LD 168, An Act Regarding Criminal Background Checks for the Sale, Transfer or Exchange of Firearms

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety

Good afternoon, Senator Beebe-Center and fellow members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety. My name is Sue Salisbury, and I represent House District 128, which includes part of Westbrook. I am here today to speak in strong support of **LD 168, An Act Regarding Criminal Background Checks for the Sale, Transfer or Exchange of Firearms**.

Colleagues, I ask that you bear with me as I discuss this piece of legislation. I know this is a difficult request for some, but I believe this is an essential discussion for us to have.

This bill is not in any way directed at responsible gun owners. This is not about trying to take away anyone's guns or right to bear arms. It's a small change that would add another layer of protection against people who *would* be irresponsible or who *would* seek to cause harm.

The goal of LD 168 is to make sure that folks who are selling their guns at garage sales or on Uncle Henry's or on Craigslist, **are protected from those who would try to circumvent the system** and use those opportunities to buy a gun and cause harm to themselves or others. I know that I would feel terrible if I sold a gun to someone and they ended up using it to commit a crime or, God forbid, kill someone, and had I known that person's intentions, I could've stopped a tragedy.

I feel strongly about this issue, but I know it is tricky for many people. Guns have been used for generations by Mainers to hunt, fish and live off the land. It's understandable that we would want to protect these time-honored traditions, and I firmly believe that respecting our history of responsible gun ownership is not in conflict with this bill.

Almost half of Mainers own guns, including my family. When my husband and I got married and formed our blended family, he taught my daughters and me how to respect guns and use them safely. Since then, I've taken a gun safety course and even got my concealed carry permit, back when having a concealed carry permit was necessary. We take gun ownership seriously and I know a lot of you do as well.

As it stands right now, if I were to go buy a car tomorrow, I would have to fill out more paperwork and jump through more hoops than if I were to buy a gun. Please consider this piece of legislation as an added safety measure and not an obstacle to gun ownership.