

Senator Beebe-Center and Rep. Salisbury, and distinguished members of the Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety. My name is Nacole Palmer, and I am a mom, an educator, a professional singer.

I have heard on numerous occasions that Governor Mills won't support background checks in Maine until we have a mass shooting like the one in Tennessee last week that killed 6 children and teachers in an elementary school. I don't know what will move Governor Mills to make sure that criminals can no longer get guns easily in Maine, but I am here to urge YOU to act BEFORE such a tragedy occurs. I am here because inaction in the face of the constant gun tragedies in this country and in this state is unacceptable and would be a clear violation of your duty to protect citizens.

I can hardly believe that I have to beg you to vote for background checks because the logic behind them is, frankly, so elementary that it begs the question of why anyone would need convincing.. Most Maine gun owners readily and easily undergo them already. They are so obviously logical that they used to be supported by groups like the NRA and the Sportsman's Alliance of Maine, back when those organizations cared about the safety of humans and not just about making money for gun manufacturers. Of course people should have to go through a 10 minute examination of their past before they are handed tools that can kill people. There are 474 licensed gun dealers in Maine, who sold 53,787 guns last year. For reference, there are 123 groceries stores in Maine, which people go to quite regularly and mostly without major challenges. With nearly 4 times the number of licensed gun dealers as grocery stores, we can see that any claims that getting to a licensed gun dealer to do a background check would impose undue challenge for gun buyers is, on its face, false, and ridiculously so.

The only people this bill will negatively affect are criminals.. Right now, criminals know they can easily and legally buy a gun in Maine from a private dealer. That's why Maine is literally known as the place criminals can come to get their guns.

Opponents of this bill will tell you, "criminals will be able to get guns through the black market anyway." Y'all, this is the black market! This is where it starts. Only, here it's not called the black market, it's just called the market for guns. It's just Uncle Henry's or a private dealer at the gun show. Why in the world would you not want to stop that? With the current law, we might as well have an addition to the Welcome sign at our southern border that says: Criminals! Get your guns here!

You have a role in stopping criminals from accessing guns in Maine. I hope and pray that you will vote "ought to pass" on LD 168.