



May 8, 2023

Testimony in Opposition to LD 551, LD 624, LD 943, LD 1451, LD 1581

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Salisbury and members of the Criminal Justice & Public Safety Committee

My name is Lynn Ellis and I serve as the Legislative Director of the Maine Gun Safety Coalition and today I speak to you on behalf of our organization. We began over 20 years ago with the focus of protecting Mainers from gun-related tragedies. We've worked on common sense gun safety legislation for all these years.

An April 10th news story reported 146 mass shootings with more than 200 people killed in mass shootings in the U.S. so far this year, following the deadly attack Monday morning at a bank in Louisville, Kentucky—the most mass shootings and mass shooting deaths at this time in the year in at least a decade. As of this morning there have been 201 mass shootings across our country.

Weakening gun laws is not the answer. Perhaps only cultural change will free America from the public health crisis that is gun violence. All of us agreeing that we can no longer watch the carnage and tragedy across our country. It seems to me that a false narrative is in place suggesting that we need more firearms. In fact, there are many studies that prove just the opposite. What is at issue here is something more foundational, and more important – finding solutions --consistent with the second amendment ---to save lives. On that I think we can all agree.

Perhaps the ongoing rise in deaths are a predictable outcome of a lack of political will to make a change and dig deeper into the divide among us. We owe to our children, and ourselves to pass laws that make things better for our citizens; a sense of wellbeing and not create more fear.

We were heartbroken when a mass shooting incident came to our state a few weeks ago. We grieve for the lives lost and for those injured. They, and their families' lives are forever changed. We are forever motivated to find solutions in honor of all those who lose their lives to gun violence.

All of us must address gun violence in our state and work together to save lives.

Lynn Ellis, Legislative Director
Maine Gun Safety Coalition