



Vicki Doudera

18 Trim Street
Camden, ME 04843

Residence: (207) 542-1990

Victoria.Doudera@legislature.maine.gov

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2 STATE HOUSE STATION

AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002

(207) 287-1400

TTY: MAINE RELAY 711

Testimony of Representative Victoria Doudera on LD 2237, “An Act to Strengthen Public Safety, Health and Well-Being by Expanding Services and Coordinating Violence Prevention Resources”

March 4, 2024

Good morning Rep. Meyer, Senator Baldacci, and esteemed members of the Health and Human Services Committee. I am Rep. Vicki Doudera, and I proudly serve District 41, the towns of Camden and Rockport. **I am here today to testify in strong support of LD 2237, An Act to Strengthen Public Safety, Health and Well-Being by Expanding Services and Coordinating Violence Prevention Resources.**

As the co-chair of the Legislature’s gun safety caucus and as a co-sponsor of this bill, I am in total support of each aspect of this legislation. Gun violence is a complex issue, taking many forms, and as we grapple with the mass shooting that occurred last fall in Lewiston, as well as the previous mass shooting which happened in our state earlier in 2023, we sadly keep in mind that gun violence also occurs in homes in which firearm suicides take place, as well as in situations where deadly intimate partner violence destroys lives and families.

This bill establishes an office of Violence Prevention which would deal with all the insidious forms that gun violence takes; establishes a “gun shop” project to aid in the prevention of firearm suicides; and creates an alert system for the public with regard to active shooter situations. The part of the bill where I would like to concentrate, however, involves funding for mental health crisis intervention services, in the form of mobile response services and crisis receiving centers.

A focus on mental health crisis intervention is what our law enforcement community, and our hospitals, are telling us Maine desperately needs. Two weeks ago I met with the chief operating officer of our local hospital, Penobscot Bay Medical Center, and she informed me of the crisis



Vicki Doudera

18 Trim Street

Camden, ME 04843

Residence: (207) 542-1990

Victoria.Doudera@legislature.maine.gov

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2 STATE HOUSE STATION

AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002

(207) 287-1400

TTY: MAINE RELAY 711

they are facing because there are not suitable places for those in a mental health crisis to receive appropriate treatment. Just this morning, I spoke with the Sheriff of my county – Knox – and Sheriff Patrick Polky said that sheriffs across the state support the establishment of receiving centers, because they are dealing with those in crisis and with substance abuse issues and they need the kind of targeted treatment these centers would provide. Our emergency rooms and county jails should not be the places where Mainers in a mental health crisis await help.

This bill's focus on the creation of six crisis centers will go a long way toward ameliorating the dire situation our hospitals and county jails are facing and will get these folks the treatment they need in a much more efficacious way. I like that the bill says "at a minimum" six centers, because these facilities are needed in every single county in our state.

In closing, I wish to thank Speaker Talbot Ross for bringing such an important bill forward, and I urge you to look favorably upon it as it proposes many measures that will help reduce gun violence in our state.

Sincerely,

Rep. Vicki Doudera