

March 5, 2024

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and Distinguished Members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Lauren Jacobs, and I live in Old Town. I am here today to ask you to support LD 2119, an Act to Support Suicide Prevention by Allowing the Voluntary Waiver of Firearm Rights.

In the fall of 2022, my sister-in-law Emily - beloved wife, daughter, sister, niece and friend - walked into a gun store and emerged minutes later owning a gun. It was the only gun she had ever owned, or ever even held. She used it moments later, dying by suicide.

Loved ones of adults struggling with mental health issues often feel that we have very few tools at our disposal to help. Mental health services can be very hard to access and stigma abounds. I believe LD 2119 would provide loved ones and mental health practitioners with a valuable tool, another way that we can support those that are struggling and provide them with a tangible way they can take action to help themselves.

There is no doubt that suicide is a complex phenomenon. There is no "one thing" that will solve the crisis of suicide in our country. But the very fact that it is so complicated means we need to approach the problem with multiple solutions. I believe that LD 2119 is one of those solutions that will make a very real difference.

Research shows that delaying access to more lethal means (and firearms are the most lethal) reduces suicide deaths. Maine has about 130 suicides by gun every year. Every year 130 Maine families face the trauma of losing their loved one in this violent, tragic way. I believe that LD 2119 would help reduce that number, and - importantly - it would make use of systems that already exist. I believe that this bill would prevent some families from suffering the heartbreak that my family did.

I urge you to support LD 2119. Thank you for your time, and I welcome any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Lauren Jacobs  
Old Town, Maine