



Maine Education Association

Grace Leavitt President | Jesse Hargrove Vice President | Beth French Treasurer
Rebecca Cole NEA Director | Rachelle Bristol Executive Director

Testimony in support of
LD 2224 "An Act to Strengthen Public Safety by Improving Maine's Firearm Laws and Mental Health System"
And
LD 2238 "An Act to Address Gun Violence in Maine by Requiring a Waiting Period for Certain Firearm Purchases"

Grace Leavitt, President, Maine Education Association
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary
March 7, 2024

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary,

My name is Grace Leavitt. I am a Spanish teacher, on leave, serving as President of the Maine Education Association. The MEA represents nearly 24,000 educators in our Maine system of public education, in pre-K-12 schools as well as in our institutions of higher education, and both retired and aspiring educators.

I am testifying on behalf of MEA in support of LD 2224, An Act to Strengthen Public Safety by Improving Maine's Firearm Laws and Mental Health System, and LD 2238, An Act to Address Gun Violence in Maine by Requiring a Waiting Period for Certain Firearm Purchases".

I testified two days ago on two other bills for improving gun safety legislation that came before your committee, so I won't repeat those same remarks here, although they apply to this legislation as well, as many changes are needed if we are to do what we can to reduce the possibility of further acts of gun violence in our state and to provide the safe communities in which we all wish to live and the safe schools and campuses our students and educators need and deserve in which to learn and work.

What I will share with you are some things that I have heard from our members that help to show how urgent it is that steps are taken in Maine to move us in the right direction.

A teacher shared with me that, during a lockdown that took place because of a dangerous incident occurring in the vicinity, they overheard their students saying to one another things like, "Don't worry; I'll save you." These were elementary school students, fearing for their lives and for the lives of their friends. They were ultimately safe and the incident came to an end, but our children are all too aware that there have been horrific shootings, mass shootings, of children, of students, of educators, elsewhere, and they are all certainly aware of what happened in Lewiston this past October.

Another teacher shared with me that, during a lockdown necessitated by the appearance on campus of a student who had made threats against others, high school students were visibly fearing for their lives, and colleagues shared that they had contacted partners to tell them they loved them, and to tell them to let their own children know they were loved.



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Yet another teacher talked about struggling to explain to their own children at home why they needed to stay indoors, again, while law enforcement looked for the perpetrator last October, not long after an earlier incident nearby that had caused families to shelter in place while they worried for their safety.

There seems to be no end to incidents that cause such reactions.

I am sharing with you a petition signed by educators just since Monday evening—with more time, I know there will be many more signatures, as there is widespread support among our members who want both our students as well as their colleagues to have safe schools in which to learn and work. In a recent survey of members, the overwhelming majority of respondents were supportive of universal background checks, extreme risk protection orders, 72-hour waiting periods, and an assault weapons ban. A majority are worried there could be a shooting in their school.

The twenty-one members of the MEA Board of Directors, representing educators throughout the state, took a unanimous position of support for common sense gun safety legislation such as what is called for in LD 2224 and LD 2238. In fact, the Board supports further steps such as banning assault weapons, limiting the capacity of ammunition magazines, universal background checks, waiting periods for all gun purchases, extreme risk protection orders, and safe storage of firearms. They hear from educators in their own schools and in their districts that Maine needs to take steps now on these issues.

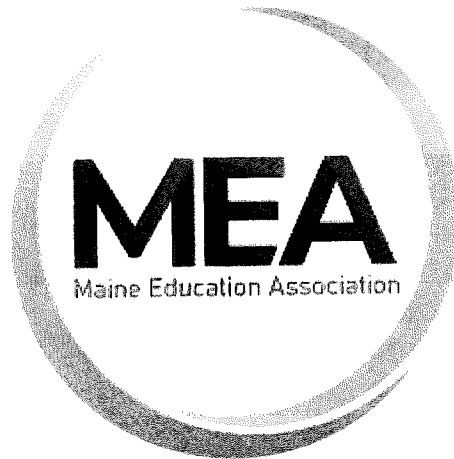
Tragically, it is already too late for too many. Let's not be too late again to take action.

We are grateful for the proposed legislation. We hope that not only you will support these bills but may also take further actions to promote safety in our state. We urge you to pass LD 2224 and LD 2238, and also urge you to support further measures as conveyed in the position taken by the MEA Board.

Thank you for your time and your very careful consideration of such important issues.

We—educators, students, all of us--are counting on you to do the right thing.

I am glad to answer any questions.



Petition in Support of Gun Safety

The MEA believes it is critical for our elected officials to take further actions towards preventing acts of violence, both in our places of education as well as in our communities.

We the undersigned support common sense gun safety legislation that will help provide the safe schools and communities in which to learn and work that our students and educators need and deserve. We support closing background check loopholes on gun purchases, instituting waiting periods for gun sales, banning assault weapons and providing more mental health supports for Maine people.

We urge our legislators to support legislation to prohibit guns from falling into the wrong hands and for more support for Mainers struggling with mental health concerns. Our students are counting on all of us.

Take future action with a single click.
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[@fastaction](#)

Contact Information

First Name

Grace

Last Name

Leavitt

Postal Code (Optional)

04330

City (Optional)

Augusta

Remember me so that I can use *FastAction* next time.

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VA Contact Name	Date Subr	Job Title: Job Title (Teacher Ed Tech Bus Driver etc.)
# Emerson, Marisa	3/4/2024	School Counselor
# Kralik, Kara	3/4/2024	Teacher
# Merrifield, Jennifer	3/4/2024	Teacher
# Smith, Judith Blackwell	3/4/2024	Retired school nurse
# Gagne, Cynthia	3/4/2024	Retired School Counselor
# Feyler, Stacey	3/4/2024	teacher
# Martin, Gail	3/4/2024	Retired 40 year teacher
# Moncure, Lora	3/4/2024	
# Chicca, Kimberly	3/4/2024	Teacher
# Carville, Douglas	3/4/2024	Principal (retired)
# Mullin, Jill	3/4/2024	Teacher & Behavior Analyst
# Griffin, Nesrene	3/4/2024	5th Grade Teacher
# Stewart, Melanie	3/4/2024	Teacher
# Mirisola-Sullivan, Savannah	3/4/2024	Teacher
# Cadorette, Jenessa	3/4/2024	Grade 6 Math Teacher
# Young, Andrew	3/4/2024	Teacher
# Goodenberger, Melissa	3/4/2024	Teacher
# Albee, Emily	3/4/2024	Teacher
# Murphy Goldman, Megan	3/4/2024	
# Wishart-Rogers, Sarah	3/4/2024	Reading Recovery Teacher
# Lamothe, Carrie	3/4/2024	Instructional Math Coach
# Hanson, Caresse	3/4/2024	
# Chamberlain, Jamie	3/4/2024	Teacher
# Donohoe, Susan	3/4/2024	Teacher
# Lambert, Cynthia	3/4/2024	Educational Technology Lead, 33 year education veteran
# Pocock, Gail	3/4/2024	Restorative Practice Coordinator
# Rinaldi, Kate	3/4/2024	Speech Language Pathologist
# Baker-Koch, Ashley	3/4/2024	Kindergarten Teacher
# Vitello, Anne	3/4/2024	
# Doolin, Carolyn	3/4/2024	Teacher
# Armitage, Marissa	3/4/2024	Teacher
# andrews, Trisha	3/4/2024	
# Lynn, Sarah	3/4/2024	Ed Tech
# MacLeod, Beth	3/4/2024	Teacher
# McHugh, Hillary	3/4/2024	Visual Arts Teacher, RSU14
# Chaponis, Charles	3/4/2024	Teacher, parent
# Randall, Mary Ellen	3/4/2024	
# Whitney, Karli	3/4/2024	Occupational therapist
# Perkinson, Heather	3/4/2024	Teacher
# Carney, Jack	3/4/2024	Teacher
# Xuan, Zhao	3/4/2024	
# Nulle, Margaret	3/4/2024	Teacher
# Sampson, Ann	3/4/2024	Teacher
# Blakemore, Megan	3/4/2024	School Librarian
# Kaye, Alyssa	3/4/2024	Teacher
# Loring, Barbara	3/4/2024	Retired Art Educator

# Robinson, Brenda	3/4/2024	Former educator; grandparent
# Hubbard, Judith	3/4/2024	Teacher
# Cormier, Cindy	3/4/2024	Teacher
# Owen, Margaret	3/4/2024	School counselor
# Huff, Julie	3/4/2024	Bus driver
# Noel, Keith	3/4/2024	Teacher
# Robbie, Karen	3/4/2024	
# Luce, Maggie	3/5/2024	
# Boggs, Lisa	3/5/2024	Teacher
# Poulin, Jeannie	3/5/2024	Teacher
# Babcock, Bridget	3/5/2024	
# Carver, Bruce	3/5/2024	Public School Teacher
# Menzie, Jasmine	3/5/2024	Teacher
# Oehrtmann, Charles	3/5/2024	Teacher, grades K - 5 music
# Amadon, Krystal	3/5/2024	
# Amadon, Krystal	3/5/2024	
# Braun, Kristen	3/5/2024	Teacher
# Rowe, Stephanie	3/5/2024	Payroll Specialist
# McGrane, Gary	3/5/2024	Retired teacher
# Thurston, Kimberly	3/5/2024	Teacher
# Kaschub, Daniel	3/5/2024	Music Teacher
# Bartke, Ashby	3/5/2024	Teacher
# Westley, Richard	3/5/2024	Teacher
# Janelle, Suzanne	3/5/2024	Retired teacher
# Cyr, Peter	3/5/2024	IT Specialist, UMS, UMFK
# Contrino, Deanna	3/5/2024	School Librarian
# Tracy, Shannon	3/5/2024	Social Worker
# Gilpatrick, Harriet	3/5/2024	retired teacher
# Cyr, Maria	3/5/2024	Retired educator
# Rideout-Dawes, Kim	3/5/2024	Teacher
# Hall, Christina	3/5/2024	Teacher
# Zuch, Leah	3/5/2024	ESOL teacher
# Jagolinzer, Karen	3/5/2024	Teacher
# Bigos, Janice	3/5/2024	Special Education Evaluator
# Turpin, Cheryl	3/5/2024	Retired Principal, currently a DOE Leadership Coach
# Smith, Molly A	3/5/2024	Retired Teacher
# von Glinsky, Stephanie	3/5/2024	
# Muir, Austin	3/5/2024	School Counselor
# Erhard, Kerrin	3/5/2024	School Librarian
# Hand, Ann	3/5/2024	Ed Tech
# zipper, jessica	3/5/2024	retired high school teacher
# Quirk, Katie	3/5/2024	Teacher
# Johnston, Sarah	3/5/2024	Retired teacher
# Seewald, Lois	3/5/2024	Special Educator
# Micoleau, Judy	3/5/2024	Retired high school counselor
# Beckett, Louisa	3/5/2024	
# Crawford, Jodi	3/5/2024	School Librarian

# Roy, Christine	3/5/2024
# Connelly, Marianne	3/5/2024 Ed Tech
# Murrow, Megan	3/5/2024 Teacher
# Thombs, Susan	3/5/2024 Teacher
# Beals, Edward	3/5/2024 Teacher
# Reed, Meg	3/6/2024 Pre-K Teacher
# Panagakos, Darren	3/6/2024 Teacher
# White, Amy	3/6/2024 Teacher