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Hello Senator Carney, Representative Moonen and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee of the Judiciary. I am Nina Milliken and I represent the towns of Blue Hill, Brooksville, Castine, Sedgwick, Surry and Trenton in the Maine House. I am offering testimony neither for nor against LD 2224 and in support of LD 2238.

If putting people in prison made us safer, the United States of America would be the safest country on earth. And yet, we are not even ranked in the top 30 safest countries. While I know that we as a nation and state have an enormous amount of work to do to ensure that our citizens are safe from the horrific level of deaths by firearm, I caution us to try to not rely so heavily on the criminal justice system as a means of bringing that level down. Prisons and jails do not change behavior. Throwing people in prison often leaves them more desperate and more likely to commit future harm. I greatly appreciate sections four and six of the bill, but I encourage the Judiciary Committee to ponder amendments that eliminate all of the elevated crimes laid out in the bill (three misdemeanors elevated to felonies). I also encourage the Committee to consider adding the language of Representative Rebecca Millett of Cape Elizabeth's bill from the 129th Legislature, LD 1312, colloquially called the "red flag law" to LD 2224. These changes would bring me in support of this bill.

I believe that there are thoughtful ways to accomplish what is required to address the enormous number of firearm-related deaths in Maine and nationally. I support LD 2238, as it is a common-sense mechanism to help. It is my opinion that guns should be treated the way we treat automobiles. Folks should need to wait to get a firearm. They should have to acquire a license to have and use a firearm. They should have to register and insure their firearms. And the state should have the right to step in and remove this privilege when someone proves themselves to not be a safe person to carry that firearm. LD 2238 aligns well with these beliefs. I encourage you to vote ought to pass on this bill.

I appreciate each of you as you have likely a long day of testimony on this bill. Feel free to reach out to me if you have any follow up questions.

Sincerely,

Nina Milliken
State Representative