

Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary
State House, Room 438
Thursday, March 7th, 2024

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”

Good afternoon Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and honorable members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Jilly Scott-Lewis and I am a first-year student at Bates College in Lewiston. I am here today in support of LD.2224 and LD.2238.

I have been in close proximity to gun violence twice in my life; once in my senior year of high school and for a second time this past October in my first semester of college. Twice in one year. Twice, I have been forced to text my parents “There is a shooting at school, I am okay and I will keep you updated.” The immense fear I felt in both of these situations is incomparable to any other fear that I have felt in my life. Fear for myself, but mostly fear for the people I love, communities I am a part of and everyone around the country who has experienced trauma related to gun violence. Having the Lewiston shootings happen in my first semester at Bates has affected, and will continue to affect, my entire college experience. Almost everything I know about Lewiston and Bates has happened while myself and everyone around me was experiencing intense grief. While for many people around Maine, things have gone back to “normal,” I think about the shootings every day and every time I hear sirens, I wonder whether I am going to have to send a third text to my parents. I find myself constantly thinking about the people for whom life will never go back to normal, whose lives were forever changed through the mental and physical trauma of experiencing the shootings themselves or losing loved ones to these shootings. While it is hard to feel hopeful, the recent proposed legislation has given me hope that change is coming.

The proposed legislation is a great first step to strengthening gun laws so that the Lewiston community never has to experience something like this again and other Maine communities never have to experience a similar trauma. I hope that in my next 3 years in Lewiston I will see meaningful gun legislation passed and for that reason I urge you to please vote LD.2224 and LD.2238 “Ought to Pass.” Thank you for your time and consideration.

Jilly Scott-Lewis
Lewiston