

Nacole Palmer  
Executive Director, Maine Gun Safety Coalition  
Testimony in Support: LD.2224 An Act to Strengthen Public Safety by Improving Maine's  
Firearm Laws and Mental Health System from sponsor Sen. Rotundo, and LD 2238 An  
Act to Address Gun Violence in Maine by Requiring a Waiting Period for Certain Firearm  
Purchases

March 7, 2024

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen and esteemed members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Nacole Palmer. I live in Bowdoin, and I serve as the executive director of the Maine Gun Safety Coalition.

Earlier this week, I went to visit the pre-kindergarten where my son will start in the Fall. I learned that they have detailed plans about what they do to prevent an active shooter from entering the building, how they plan to throw kids out of windows and instruct the children to run as fast they they can away from the building if a shooter does get in, and which closets they might hide in, if running is not an option. My son is 3.5 years old.

We don't have to live this way. Gun violence IS preventable. And the way we prevent and reduce gun violence is by creating a network of laws, that act like a safety net—each working in different ways to reduce harm to different individuals in different circumstances.

The laws before you today represent 3 of the most effective means we have to reduce gun violence significantly

The evidence is clear. Passing expanded background checks and creating a 72 hour waiting period for firearm purchases will save lives. And not just that, these measures are constitutional, reasonable steps that the vast majority of responsible gun owners in Maine (as well as Republicans) embrace. And in the case of background checks, gun owners already undergo background checks easily and without hardship in the state of Maine every day.

The Maine Gun Safety Coalition is grateful that Governor Mills and legislative leaders within these walls are listening to the people of Maine, and that they have

proposed gun safety reforms, such as expanded background checks and 72 hour waiting periods, that will make a real and lasting difference here, saving countless lives.

Background checks, of LD 2224, are the bedrock of gun safety in any state. Passing this lowest of bars for gun safety with a common sense, Maine-based approach is a welcome and foundational step that ensure greater safety for our communities.

We also ask that this committee take additional steps to further improve the yellow-flag law in certain vital ways:

1. We must create additional ways for families and law enforcement to take steps to remove guns from people who are a danger to themselves or others.
2. Families know best how to take care of their loved ones. They are often the first ones to know when their family member is struggling or needs help. But families need more tools than the current law or this legislation provide, to get their loved ones help in a crisis.
3. Law enforcement needs more tools that allow them to work more efficiently, and more safely, to address and prevent major crises.
4. And people who are struggling deserve to be taken care of, not to be taken against their will, losing ALL of their freedoms.

The Maine Gun Safety Coalition strongly supports 72 hour Waiting Periods on all firearm purchases. You will undoubtedly hear from some individuals today that such a rule would make gun shows impossible, or would decrease business for business owners of gun shops. Don't be fooled, however; the states that have waiting periods on gun sales include Vermont and Colorado, both of which still have numerous gun shows that boast booming business. Commerce finds a way, and I have no doubt that the creative and innovative people of Maine will find ways to deliver weapons safely to buyers, all while working to significantly reduce both homicides and suicides in Maine, which waiting periods enable.

Please vote yes on LD 2224 and LD 2238, amended as I described. Together, we can build a safer future for Maine.