

Testimony
in support
of LD 2224 and 2238

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, my name is Susan Inches and I am a resident of North Yarmouth. I support responsible gun ownership and I allow hunting on my 26 acre farm. I'm a person of faith, and am a long standing member of First Parish Yarmouth. I strongly support LD 2224 and 2238.

As representatives of the public, our legislature should be firmly focused on public safety. The Legislature should support non violent solutions to address domestic violence, mental illness, social isolation and bullying, and fear. Here are four guiding principles for establishing safe gun policies:

Four Guiding Principles for Safe Gun Policy:

1. **To protect our children** from gun violence at school and gun accidents at home.
2. **To protect our public gathering places** from gun violence—by public gathering places I mean bowling alleys, shopping malls, libraries, bars, restaurants, post offices, parks and playing fields.
3. **To protect our law enforcement officers** from gun violence on the job and make it safer and easier for them to do their work.
4. **To protect our mentally ill** from harming themselves and others with firearms.

The Legislature should recognize that many people in Maine fear for their safety and want to keep firearms in their homes. They should recognize that some people find pleasure in recreational shooting. They should recognize the second amendment which gives citizens the right to bear arms.

But to make Maine safe for everyone, the Legislature should enact policies that prioritize public safety first and follow the four guiding principles above.

LD 2224 and 2238 lay out a policy framework that supports the guiding principles.

- Statewide "crisis receiving centers" will prevent both suicides and mass shootings. Opening these centers will be the silver lining from the horrible mass murder in Lewiston.
- Expanded background checks will prevent guns from falling into the wrong hands.
- Protective custody measures will support law enforcement officers in their work.
- A 72 hour waiting period will reduce the number of guns purchased in moments of fear, dispute, or mental health crisis.
- I also support a ban on assault style weapons. These weapons of war should not be owned by citizens, especially without any training whatsoever in their safety or use.
- A clear definition of assault weapons is given in Sen. Angus King's bill in Congress. It makes sense to use the same clear definition in Maine law.

I thank the sponsors of these bills for putting them on the table. **In passing them, Maine will lead the nation on sensible gun policy. In passing them, Maine will maintain its valuable reputation as a safe place to live, do business and raise a family.**

I urge your unanimous support of these bills. I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.