

Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary  
State House, Room 438  
Thursday, March 7, 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 distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary. My name is Anastasia Fowler, I’m a senior at Bates College in Lewiston, and I am testifying in support of LD 2224 and LD 2238.

On October 25th, I sheltered in an academic building overnight after my a-cappella rehearsal was promptly canceled amidst news that there was an active shooter in Lewiston. As the leader of my a cappella group, the younger members were looking to me and my co-leader to provide support, comfort, and most importantly, answers. Yet, we were left in the dark about the exact locations of the shooter for most of the night. I didn’t have answers, of course. I didn’t feel safe, how was I supposed to tell them that they were safe? We’ve heard countless tragic stories of shootings across the country. And yet, it was unfathomable to believe it was happening in this place we call home. However, without proper gun safety measures, events like this are, indeed, fathomable. The night of October 25th is a reminder that no one is safe or exempt from tragedy, regardless of how “safe” gun owners are, without proper gun safety.

Though the bills sponsored by Senator Peggy Rotundo and Representative Kristen Cloutier certainly do not undo the tragedy, they decrease the potential for this awful event to reoccur and become a pattern in Maine. By standardizing background checks on all advertised, unlicensed gun purchases, granting law enforcement an additional tool to detain individuals who may pose a risk pending evaluation, and instituting a 72 hour waiting period to buy firearms that might lower impulsive acts of gun violence, LD 2224 and LD 2238 allow us to prevent unnecessary violence with irrevocably pernicious effects.

Represent your constituents by saving them from future harm. Please vote in favor of these bills. Thank you for your time today.

Anastasia Fowler  
Lewiston