

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 Quinn Simmons and I am a senior at Bates College in Lewiston. I am here today to provide testimony in support of LD.2224 and LD.2238.

I am a senior at Bates and – like so many others – love Lewiston. It has been my home away from home and has housed some of my dearest memories. And yet, Lewiston is now also a place that has housed some of my most devastating memories. On Wednesday October 25th, 2023, I sat on the floor of my dorm room shaking. The blinds were down, the windows locked, and I felt totally alone. I was terrified, because, while I ate dinner, eighteen innocent people were killed less than five minutes away from me. The following forty eight hours felt like a blur. We were in lockdown, anxiously waiting for email updates and texts. When we would get food we would be assisted across the street by Lewiston Police and Bates Campus Safety. I felt profound love and gratitude for the people around me.

The Sunday following the shooting I attended a community vigil at the Basilica in Lewiston. I stood side by side with people who had lived in Lewiston their entire lives and others, like myself, who had lived in Lewiston for the past three years. We were mourning a devastating loss together.

It should never have gotten to this point. Gun violence is preventable. Supporting legislation like LD.2224 and LD.2238 is essential in making our communities safer. Gun sales must require 72 hour waiting periods and background checks. Expanding the “Yellow Flag Law” is important and I ask the committee to consider implementing the “Red Flag Law.”

I urge you to please vote LD.2224 and LD.2238. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Quinn Simmons
Lewiston