

Testimony of Hanna Ranis

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 Hanna Ranis and I am a first-year student at Bates College in Lewiston Maine. I am here today in support of LD.2224 and LD.2238.

As I fall asleep I often replay the night of October 25th. How I went from enjoying time outside with my new friends to panicking as our phones went off. Running as the red and blue helicopter lights appeared overhead. Gasping for breath as the sirens screamed. We didn't know where the danger was. It felt like it could have been anywhere. I knew I wanted to get to a door so it could lock behind me, insulating me from the unknown gun. At that moment the door was all I could focus on, something to grab onto and let slam behind me.

Once through the door, I began to face the tragedy of the lives that didn't find safety. I collapsed into my roommate's arms. The shaking and calling of family and friends started. We waited for three days as the sound of sirens and helicopter blades relentlessly echoed over our heads. We waited as we talked on the phone from separate shelter-in-place locations. And we waited as we thanked the incredible people in our dining hall who showed up for us even in the midst of their own grief.

I'm not sure if I'll ever feel safe again anywhere. On New Year's Eve, a firecracker exploded overhead, signaling the hope of a new year. Instead of celebrating this hope, terror gripped me. I thought the sound was a gunshot.

I may have fears, but we are not helpless. We can act now to prevent future gun violence. Implementing a 72-hour waiting period for firearm purchases and expanding background checks is a good start. I urge you to please vote LD.2224 and LD.2238 “Ought to Pass.” Thank you.