

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 distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary. My name is Jamie Hollander. I have spent the past four years living in Lewiston while attending Bates College. I am a founding member of Bates’ “Students Demand Action” club, and I am here today to testify in support of LD 2224 and LD 2238, because I believe that no one should have to live in fear of gun violence in the communities that promise to keep them safe.

Growing up in the US, I was constantly aware of the threat of gun violence. Most kids in my generation can tell you the exact procedure each of their schools had prepared in the event of an active shooter: Shut the shades. Barricade the door. Hide under the green smiley face in the corner. Do not open the door, even if you hear your friend crying in the hallway.

The abstract threat that I had always prepared for became a reality on October 25th. I was sitting on the first floor of the Bates library when I received the first text, “BTW. Be careful. Just heard there might be an active shooter in Lewiston”. Shortly after, my friends and I decided to seek shelter on the third floor (our training from school kicked in). I texted my parents, “there’s an active shooter less than 10 minutes from campus. I’m safe, please don’t worry about me.” A daughter should never have to send that text, a parent should never have to receive it. I spent the next 10 hours in the library, and the days that followed, fighting off fear, despair, anger, and frustration as we grappled with the profound loss experienced by our community.

Studies have shown that states with fewer gun safety laws experience increased instances of gun-related violence. Maine was given a score of “D-” on the Gun Law Scorecard (Giffords Law Center) exposing a crucial weakness in our legislation. The bills brought before the committee today are important steps in strengthening Maine’s gun safety policies. That being said, I urge the committee to continue to work towards even stronger, life-saving gun safety measures. The proposed changes to our yellow flag laws fall short of a more effective Extreme Risk Protection Order that streamlines the process for loved ones to intervene through the court to temporarily remove firearms from people in crisis that pose a threat to themselves and others. Lawmakers should also address the sale of assault style weapons that are designed to kill as efficiently and brutally as possible. The time is now to pass meaningful gun safety laws to protect the lives of all Mainers.

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

Jamie Hollander
Lewiston