

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”

Hello Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and honorable members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Cassidy Meyer. I am a junior at Bates College in Lewiston, Maine. I am speaking today in support of LD. 2238 and LD.2224. Gun violence is a public health epidemic. Maine’s gun laws are some of the least restrictive in the country which was made clear by the tragic events on October 25th in Lewiston. However, we have the opportunity to change this today.

On October 25th, I was two months into my abroad program in Asia when I was pulled out of my homestay across the world and told that there was a mass shooting in Lewiston and that Bates and the city were on lockdown. I was out of wifi and without any cell reception, so I could not get more information on whether my friends were ok or if the shooter had been apprehended. All I knew was that a mass shooting had happened. As the next few days unfolded I anxiously refreshed my browser once I had access to WiFi again; waiting for any news on the situation.

I felt so alone in this foreign country where gun violence and guns are not even a concept that the Bhutanese people understood. It is so foreign to them that I didn’t even try to explain. I was left to process the tragedy away from Lewiston, my home, and all of the people I love there. I desperately wanted to be with my nature club elementary students or the preschool kids I teach. I wanted to be with my community.

Although the people of Bhutan didn’t understand these events, many of the other American students in my program had experienced gun violence in their homes or schools. “I didn’t think it could happen to me” was no longer a foreign concept. It further proves that this is a public health crisis that plagues all of America. We have the opportunity to prevent this from being the norm. I urge you to support LD 2238 and LD 2224. These bills would protect the people of Maine and reduce the instances of gun violence.

A 72-hour waiting period is proven to reduce gun homicides by 17%¹. Universal background checks have proven to reduce firearm homicides by 13%². I never want to have 3 days of not knowing if my friends are ok. I implore you to prioritize the safety of Mainers and vote “Ought to Pass” on this legislation.

Thank you for your consideration.
Cassidy Meyer
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¹ 1. “Waiting Periods,” Giffords, September 26, 2023,

<https://giffords.org/lawcenter/gun-laws/policy-areas/gun-sales/waiting-periods/>.

² 1. “Effects of Background Checks on Violent Crime,” RAND, January 10, 2023,

<https://www.rand.org/research/gun-policy.html>.