

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 Hana Roggendorf and I am a first-year student at Bates College in Lewiston. I am here today to provide testimony in support of LD.2224 and LD.2238.

When I was seven, my mom picked me up from school one day and hugged me so tight I thought she would never let go. I didn’t understand why she seemed so emotionally raw until we got home and turned on the news. As I sat in my second grade class that morning, 20 children my exact age and 6 of their teachers had been murdered with an assault weapon at Sandy Hook Elementary- less than 30 minutes away. The image of police cars and flashing lights on my living room T.V. screen still haunts me.

Sitting on the floor of the Bates library on the night of October 25th, I saw these images again as one of the largest mass shootings in history was occurring just miles from my campus. Time stood still as I, fellow students, and the people of Lewiston sheltered in place fearing that a man with an assault rifle could approach at any moment – fearing for our lives. In the hours, days, weeks, and months that followed, this fear has not gone away. The fear lives in the pit of my stomach, constricting my lungs when I hear sirens or helicopters from my dorm window.

In my first semester of college, I should have been stuck in the library cramming for an exam – not stuck in the library for over twelve hours as a mass shooter was at large minutes away from me. I should not have known what it meant to be killed by an assault rifle at the age of seven and myself and the people of Lewiston should not have had to witness and experience such a tragedy.

Though I am “from away” I feel proud to go to college in Maine. The people of Maine deserve hope, not fear. The people of Maine deserve stronger gun safety legislation. The people of Maine deserve a safe place to call our home. The legislation sponsored by Senator Peggy Rotundo and Representative Kristen Cloutier is a step in the right direction to combat the epidemic of gun violence in the state of Maine. I urge you to please vote “Ought to Pass” on LD.2224 and LD.2238 and to consider enacting even more comprehensive gun safety legislation. Thank you for your time and consideration.