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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Testimony of Rep. Victoria Doudera 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
before the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary

March 7, 2024

Greetings Senator Carney, Representative Moonen and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary. My name is Vicki Doudera and I represent House District 41, which includes Camden and Rockport. I am here today 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.**

Responsible gun ownership, gun violence prevention, and support for behavioral and mental health services have been my focus during my three terms in the Maine House of Representatives. So it is no surprise that I am in strong support of both of these bills.

LD 2238 addresses an important component of suicide prevention: access to lethal means. As this committee knows, firearms have the highest suicide fatality rate, relative to other commonly used means in the United States. Here in Maine, 57% of all suicides were by firearm. Restricting access to firearms has consistently been linked to reduced suicide and, since suicide is often an impulsive act, a waiting period or "cooling off" time of 72 hours can save lives.

LD 2224 is broad in scope with many measures that will help prevent gun violence, and I appreciate the work of the Governor and her team on this bill.

The area that I believe is particularly impactful is the bill's strengthening of Maine's background check law with regard to advertised sales of firearms. As I have stated in the past in my role as co-chair of the Gun Safety Caucus, advertised gun sales should follow the rules already in place for commercial sales, both to prevent guns from falling into the wrong hands here in Maine, and to stop the flow of guns from Maine to states – and countries – where firearm laws are stricter.

Alas, we are not closing the background check loophole entirely. It breaks my heart to know that Canada's worst mass shooting was committed with guns from our state¹, and it is not clear to me whether this bill would have stopped that, as the killer's purchases of a semi-automatic Colt AR-15-style gun may have been a private sale that occurred at a gun show.

This bill does not cover private sales, but it does make important progress, and I hope that at some point in the future it will be expanded to be universal.

Thank you for your consideration of these two policy measures designed to help reduce firearm violence in our state and beyond.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Victoria W. Doudera". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Rep. Vicki Doudera

¹ <https://wgme.com/news/local/canadas-worst-mass-shooting-was-committed-with-guns-from-maine>