

To: Sen. Carney, Rep. Moonen, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary

From: Louise Gephart, Brunswick, ME 04011

Re: Support for LD 2238: An Act to Address Gun Violence in Maine by Requiring a Waiting Period for Certain Firearm Purchases

Intro: Sen. Carney, Rep. Moonen and members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Louise Gephart and I live in Brunswick, Maine.

Testimony: Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support the 72-hour waiting period for purchase of a firearm. I am a retired Clinical Social Worker, and I worked in the Maine mental health system for over 40 years. Gun violence was not at all common in my practice, but in the rare case where it was, the result was suicide in response to a perceived crisis in the person's life. This tragedy created so many victims – not only the person who died, but their family, loved ones, and their entire community. Suicide can impact families through multiple generations. At the time, I remember thinking, "If only there was time to intervene, to give the impulse time to pass before the person could get a gun." Suicide is so often a permanent response to a temporary situation. Time to stop and consider, listen, ask for and accept help, can make so much difference. Thankfully, I have experienced many lives saved by timely offers of help and caring intervention.

The 72-hour waiting period will ensure that there is time for these processes to occur. It is truly a "common sense" action and is relatively easy to implement without much inconvenience to anyone. In conjunction with universal background checks and effective extreme risk procedures, it is a step toward saving lives. I urge you to support this act and move it forward as "ought to pass."