

Peggy McGehee  
Falmouth, Maine

**Testimony in Support of L.D. 2238.**

Good afternoon, Chair Carney, Chair Moonen and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

I am Peggy McGehee, a Falmouth resident, and an adjunct professor at the University of Maine School of Law. I speak personally today in support of L.D. 2238.

If this law is enacted, dozens of Mainers' lives may be saved from gun suicide. How do we know this? We can compare the rate of gun suicides in states that have gun purchase wait period laws or gun permit laws with built-in processing periods, to states that have neither. States with such wait periods typically have dramatically lower rates of gun suicide than do states, like Maine, that do not.

Here is a representative comparison of six states with such wait periods, to six states with neither:

Gun Suicide Rate in States with a Gun Purchase Wait Period or Gun Permit Processing Period	Gun Suicide Rate in States with No Gun Purchase Wait Period and no Gun Permit Processing Period
Rhode Island <b>2.05</b> gun suicides per 100,000	Wyoming <b>18.05</b> gun suicides per 100,000
New Jersey <b>2.02</b>	West Virginia <b>13.04</b>
Maryland <b>4.07</b>	New Hampshire <b>9.02</b>
California <b>3.90</b>	Maine <b>9.47</b>
Massachusetts <b>1.86</b>	Arizona <b>10.24</b>
New York <b>2.07</b>	Alabama <b>10.28</b>

Sources: <https://www.bradyunited.org/fact-sheets/gun-suicide-across-the-states>; <https://worldpopulationreview.com/state-rankings/waiting-period-for-guns-by-state>; <https://gunnewsdaily.com/license-to-carry-gun-laws-by-state/><sup>1</sup>

Last year Vermont enacted its own 3-day wait period law to reduce its high gun suicide rate of **10.45**.

This bill is constitutional. How do we know this? A federal court in Colorado held last November, in denying a petition to block Colorado's new 3-day wait period law, that the Second Amendment does not prohibit such a wait period, stating:

*"After examining the language of the Second Amendment... I find... that the plain text does not cover the waiting period required by the Act. This conclusion is bolstered by the fact that the Act is a regulation on the commercial sale of firearms and thus is presumptively permissible [and] the evidence before me establishes that the Act is consistent with the Nation's historical tradition of firearm regulation... [S]aving approximately one hundred people in Colorado this year outweighs the aggregate harm of minimal expenditures of time and sacrificed business opportunities."*

Source: <https://www.courthousenews.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/rocky-mountain-gun-owners-v-colorado-order-preliminary-injunction-usdc-colorado.pdf>.

A June 2023 Survey showed that the majority of Mainers, from every region, and regardless of party affiliation or gun ownership, support the passage of a 3-day wait period bill.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments, and for voting that L.D. 2238 ought to pass.

<sup>1</sup> The same 12 states' over-all suicide rates are comparably low vs. high:  
**Compare:** RI, 9.59 over-all suicides per 100,000; NJ, 8.25; MD, 10.15; CA, 10.81; Mass, 9.92; and NY, 8.28  
**to:** WY, 24.77; WV, 21.11; NH, 19.27; ME, 18.45; AZ, 19.21; and Ala, 16.47.  
Source: <https://www.bradyunited.org/fact-sheets/gun-suicide-across-the-states>