

TO: The Honorable Anne Carney
The Honorable Matt Moonen
Members of the Judiciary Committee

DATE: March 7, 2024

RE: An Act to Address Gun Violence in Maine by Requiring a Waiting Period for
Certain Firearm Purchases

Good morning, Senator Carney and Representative Moonen,

My name is Emilia Toth. I'm a resident of Portland and a member of the League of Women Voters Youth Council. I have been closely following the proposed gun safety bills for this session, and I am testifying Ought to Pass on LD 2238.

I am a young person who has already seen gun violence hit close to home on several occasions. I grew up in Nashville, TN, and was shaken by the Covenant School shooting in May 2023, which took place 7 minutes away from where I attended high school. I moved to Maine and immediately felt safer, but the Lewiston shooting of October 2023 destroyed the feeling of safety that exists in this wonderful state I now call home. Both shooters suffered from mental illness, and the latter was found dead from a self-inflicted gunshot wound.

I have been advocating for gun safety since 2016 and am still full of hope for state legislature that could make our communities safer, despite the lack of governmental action that has been taken. I am relieved that Maine Senators have proposed LD 2238, which would implement 72-hour waiting periods before possession of firearms after purchase. Legislature regarding waiting periods has been proven to reduce suicide rates, as the time in between firearm purchase and attempt is vital, and on several occasions, lifesaving. Mental health is a real sickness that isn't taken seriously. Not everyone should have easy access to firearms, and a required wait for weapon possession has the potential to save individuals from harming themselves and others, by leaving time to find help and resources.

Mental illness cannot be ignored any longer. While firearms can still be potentially dangerous despite the time it is acquired, I am glad that our state lawmakers have stepped up to introduce a 72-hour waiting period, which has been proven to be a life-saving amount of time. Every little action taken to achieve gun safety is a big step towards the decrease of gun violence statewide. I urge you to vote Ought to Pass on LD 2238.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,
Emilia Toth