

# Maine Association of Psychiatric Physicians

Testimony of David Moltz, MD  
To the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary  
129th Maine State Legislature  
March 7, 2024

Senator Carney, Representative Mooney, and Distinguished Members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is David Moltz, MD, and I live in Portland, Maine. I am here today representing the Maine Association of Psychiatric Physicians, in support of LD 2238.

As a psychiatrist I am far too familiar with the problem of preventing suicide. A fact that is frequently overlooked in discussions of gun violence is that 89% of deaths by gun in Maine are suicides. More than half of suicide deaths in Maine are by gun. And this is because suicide attempts by gun are lethal 85% of the time, compared, for instance, with drug overdose, which is lethal only 3-5% of the time.

Impulsiveness plays a part in many suicide attempts. In one study, 70% of people who survived serious suicide attempts said that the time between when they thought of suicide and when they attempted it was less than one hour, and 24% said it was less than 5 minutes. In that brief time, if a gun is available it will be used, and when you use a gun, there is no chance for second thoughts.

This impulsivity is why it is vital to legislate a waiting period, such as 72 hours, before a gun can be purchased. It allows a cooling-off period, time to have second thoughts and to change your mind before acting. And it doesn't interfere with second amendment rights. You still get to have your gun; you just have to wait a few days to get it. But those few days may mean the difference between life and death.

On behalf of the Maine Association of Psychiatric Physicians I urge you to save lives by voting "ought to pass" for LD 2238. Thank you.

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