

My name is Jennifer K. Zanca, I live in Auburn, Maine. I was dining at Schemengees Bar and Grille the night of the mass shooting on October 25th, 2023. There were 4 of us girls who had been invited to a golf and decided to go there since it was central for all of us to return home easily. We were sitting approximately 20 feet from where the shooter opened fire. It was horrific, the sound of a gun and witnessing a shooter open fire and randomly mow people down with an assault rifle continues to haunt me. Immediately, I dropped to the ground and made my way behind a bar that led to another dining room.

Unfortunately, I was shot in my left arm while escaping, it felt like my arm was blown off. Holding my left arm with my right arm as tight as possible to act like a tourniquet to prevent blood loss. I found myself in the dark kitchen, then making my way out the kitchen door. My Humerus bone was shattered, the bullet blew through my deltoid muscle which is now missing. I had 10 screws to secure the bone which to this day is still broken. I don't know the long-term prognosis at this time. My nature is to stay positive, but the reality is that I am compromised for life.

Since the shooting I have started looking into gun safety laws, researching statistics about what works to keep the public the safest. I understand it's a loaded topic and my friends may have different opinions but here is where I stand. The states that have put in place "safe" gun laws ie. waiting periods, background checks, and red flag laws have the lowest incidence of gun violence per capita. States include Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey, Oregon. The states like Mississippi, Louisiana New Mexico, Alabama and Alaska have very little gun laws and have the highest incidence of gun violence per capita. The statistics are clear. It seems so reasonable to put these measures in place because it works. Interestingly, if you listen to politicians and believe them you would think New York was the most violent state and that is simply not true. The shooter, Robert Card had a "legal" right to buy and bear arms, he purchased guns legally because that's his constitutional right. How about my rights to dine in a restaurant safely without being maimed for life or worse, how about those peoples' rights who will no longer see their loved ones, whose lives ended abruptly because of gun violence.

This is where Red flag laws, especially in this instance, could have made a difference. Red Flag Laws: Extreme risk laws, enable a judge to temporarily remove a person's access to guns if they pose a danger to self or others based on family or law enforcement. I believe this would have given the law enforcement more authority to confiscate the shooters' guns. Furthermore, the HSCA Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, the first federal agency response to mass shootings has put into place ERPO-Extreme risk protection order to resource center to assist implementation of red flag laws, provide assistance, training and guidance for implementation. Although there are such varying opinions on this matter, I respectfully submit mine. Please vote to pass LD2283. Thank you for listening.

Sincerely,
Jennifer K. Zanca

Survivor, Lewiston mass shooting, Oct 25th