

LD 2283: An Act to Enact the Crisis Intervention Order Act to Protect the Safety of the Public

Presented to Maine's Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary

As the state's largest grassroots mental health advocacy organization, NAMI Maine supports the passage of LD 2283: An Act to Enact the Crisis Intervention Order to Protect the Safety of the Public. We extend our gratitude to Speaker Talbot-Ross and her esteemed colleagues for attentively considering the vital aspects of implementing evidence-based policies and combating the stigma associated with mental health challenges.

National statistics reveal that merely 3-4% of violent crimes in the nation are linked to mental health issues¹. To underscore this point amidst today's committee deliberations, evidence points to various risk factors for mass attacks in public or community violence include criminal history, parental criminal history, past use of firearms, stressors in someone's environment and financial instability. A fifth risk factor in both these categories is that someone is male.² Given the imperative need to increase the ability to protect the safety of all our communities, formulating policy grounded in researched risk factors is imperative. By separating crisis intervention orders from a mental health diagnosis, this committee endeavors to challenge the misguided and prejudice stigma. LD 2283 offers a framework for safeguarding communities we live in based on empirical research, rather than outdated and discriminatory perceptions surrounding mental health.

This legislation provides the means for family members who are concerned about suicide risk in a loved one to also ensure access to lethal means is restricted. Presently in Maine, a staggering 89-90% of firearm deaths are the result of suicide, with firearms accounting for over 60% of the means used in lethal suicide attempts in the State of Maine. In the most updated statistics, 277 individual died of suicide in the Maine in 2021³. Despite common assumption that an individual who dies of suicide has a diagnosed mental illness, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) found that 54% of the individuals who died of suicide lacked a mental health diagnosis⁴. Consequently, basing firearms access restriction policies on the presence of a diagnosis may overlook those at greatest risk. States that have implemented emergency restriction protection orders akin to the one proposed here have witnessed a significant reduction in firearm suicide deaths. Connecticut, for instance, saw a 13.7% decrease in firearm suicide deaths, while Indiana

¹ J. Swanson, E. McGinty, and V. Mays. "Mental Illness and the Reduction of Gun Violence and Suicide: Bringing Epidemiologic Research to Policy." *Annals of Epidemiology*, 25 (2015) 366-376.

² Elbogen, E. B., & Vervoukakis, N. (2023). *Violence and Mental Illness Rethinking Risk Factors and Enhancing Public Safety*. NYU Press.

³ CDC Suicide Rates by State (2021) *Stats of the State - Suicide Mortality* ([cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov))

⁴ CDC Vital Signs, Suicide Rising Across the US (June 2018). [vs-0618-suicide-H.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov) ([cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov))

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observed a 7.5% decline.⁵ Contrary to myths suggesting that individuals contemplating suicide would seek alternative means if firearms access were restricted, research indicates that 90% of would and do not.

This legislation presents evidence-based intervention to mitigate the potential for lethal outcomes. NAMI Maine recognizes the importance of upholding constitutional rights while ensuring robust support for individuals in their most vulnerable moments through research-based policy implementation. It is also imperative to provide appropriate training and support for all stakeholders involved. NAMI Maine appreciates for the opportunity to advocate for LD 2283 before this committee.



ABOUT NAMI MAINE: Incorporated in 1984, the National Alliance on Mental Illness, Maine Chapter (NAMI Maine) is the state's largest grassroots mental health organization. With support from national and regional affiliates, the agency is dedicated to building better lives for everyone impacted by behavioral health concerns. NAMI Maine engages with leaders and community partners at all levels to improve the state's mental health system through collaboration and education.

⁵ Kivisto AJ & Phalen PL. (2018). Effects of risk-based firearm seizure laws in Connecticut and Indiana on suicide rates, 1981–2015. *Psychiatric Services*.

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