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## April 16, 2025 Judiciary Committee Hearings

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From Hillary Shende <hcb2@hotmail.com>

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To Hillary Shende <hcb2@hotmail.com>

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and members of the committee, my name is Hillary Shende from Brunswick, and I am here to oppose LDs 208, 1230, and 1062.

I started testifying for common sense gun safety bills when my children were old enough to attend school, and the possibility that they could be shot there came into sharp focus. It's a worry that only Americans and people in war zones face. So please don't backtrack when Maine is finally on the right path to keeping its citizens safer from gun violence.

Other testifiers today will point to the effectiveness of wait periods and background checks. That evidence is indisputable, and it is the reason that Maine passed these measures in the first place. Why would we want to repeal them? A couple of arguments typically come forward, so I am going to spend the bulk of my time debunking those.

The first common argument is that "we don't need these measures because Maine is a safe state." No, it's not. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the UNODC, the firearm death rate in Maine in 2022 was higher than 87 out of 100 countries they studied. That is an appalling level of gun violence, and keep in mind that this statistic is from the year BEFORE we had the mass shootings in the towns of Bowdoin and Lewiston.

Another common objection to gun safety laws is they "will only trample on the 2nd Amendment rights of law-abiding citizens." Again, no. You can still hunt and protect your home. Besides, there IS no right in the constitution to access weapons "immediately" and "no matter who you are." Even conservative Justice Antonin Scalia said that the right to bear arms can be restricted.

Furthermore, this notion that "criminals aren't going to obey the laws anyway, so we shouldn't bother writing them," is ridiculous. Some people are going to drive way over the speed limit. Does that mean we shouldn't have traffic laws? Of course not. Are some people still going to harm themselves or others when background checks and waiting periods are in place? Sure. Does that mean ~~the law~~ we should make it easy for them to do so? Absolutely not.

Perhaps the most morally repugnant argument I've heard is that gun safety laws such as background checks and waiting periods are "inconvenient." I'm sorry, you want to possess an item that can kill my

child in an instant? You can handle the inconvenience. That inconvenience is so much less important than whether today's kids make it to adulthood. I can't believe I even need to say that.

I also can't stay for the afternoon hearings, so I just want to publicly say now that I wholeheartedly support the passage of both LD1120 and LD1299, because safe storage laws will also help keep my kids alive. Thank you.