

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and esteemed members of the committee. My name is Michele Stapleton, and I live in Brunswick. I respectfully testify in support of LD 1378: An Act to Protect Maine Communities by Enacting the Extreme Risk Protection Order Act.

I want to use my two minutes to talk about polling.

Americans want commonsense firearm safety legislation. When polled on a wide variety of proposals, the average American supports 56-58% of them according to Gallup, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/1645/guns.aspx>, and Pew, <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2024/07/24/key-facts-about-americans-and-guns/>. And something interesting, although you legislators mostly see us older folks here wearing the tee shirts, the younger you are the more likely you are to support stricter laws.

Moving specifically to Red Flag laws, this is one of the most popular proposals.

In 2019, 70% of Americans supported them when initiated by law enforcement, and 77% when family-initiated. *Poll: Americans, Including Republicans And Gun Owners, Broadly Support Red Flag Laws*, <https://www.npr.org/2019/08/20/752427922/poll-americans-including-republicans-and-gun-owners-broadly-support-red-flag-law>

Forward to 2023, in a Fox News poll 80% of Americans supported them, including 76% of gun owning households. *New Fox News Polling Confirms Popularity of Gun Safety*

*Laws Among Democrats, Republicans, and Gun Owners, <https://momsdemandaction.org/press/new-fox-news-polling-confirms-popularity-of-gun-safety-laws-among-democrats-republicans-and-gun-owners/>*

When we tried before to get this passed in Maine, the numbers lined up with national polling with 81% of Maine voters supporting Red Flag laws. This including overwhelming majorities who identified as gun owners and/or as Republican. 81 Percent of Maine Voters Support Life-Saving Red Flag Legislation, <https://www.everytown.org/press/new-polling-81-percent-of-maine-voters-support-life-saving-red-flag-legislation/>

I helped collect signatures to get this on the ballot. I went out probably a dozen times. And the biggest challenge I faced was the miserably cold December and January weather; it was not getting people to sign. Mainers are tired of our gun violence epidemic. You know how people normally avert their eyes and walk a little faster when they see you collecting signatures? All I had to say was "I'm gathering signatures for gun safety legislation," and they'd make a beeline to learn more. And, then, they'd stand there in the cold telling me how frustrated they were about gun violence in our country.

I look forward to helping to get this passed in November.

Thank-you for your support.