

Testimony of John C. Brewer, DO of 100 Hicks St . Portland, Maine.

Augusta, Maine State House June 11, 2025 before the Judiciary Committee re: the Extreme Risk Protection Order hearing for referendum bill LD 1378.

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and esteemed members of the committee. My name is John Brewer, DO. I live in the Portland area. I respectfully testify in support of LD 1378 An Act to Protect Maine Communities by Enacting the Extreme Risk Protection Order Act. I have been a Maine citizen for 40 years and more than 30 of those years I served the folks of the Portland Area as an Osteopathic Family Practice Physician so I feel I have a unique insight into the nature of people. Their traumas, fears, safety concerns, insecurities, blessed events, tragedies.

With this background knowledge I am strongly testifying in favor of the referendum bill. Not so much that it is just plain common sense, but more because I know from personal experience what the terrible consequences of **not** having this protective measure on hand in a time of crisis can mean for so many folks. I have treated patients that have suffered immeasurable tragic loss, much of which may have been avoided if common sense laws, like ERPO, prevailed.

Right now, suicide by firearm for preteens and teens is at an all-time high, especially for young males. Impulsivity at that age is a well-known phenomenon as most parents will testify. Very crucial ways to break that easy connect of impulse to action is to intervene and in a timely way. That is what a Red Flag (ERPO) Law will accomplish. By allowing a friend/family member to intervene in the destructive one way path without the time consuming process found in the Yellow Flag version, many lives have been spared. It has proven to work in many of the other 21 states that have wisely chosen to employ that law.

Impulsiveness and planning with firearms can also be associated with the homicidal thought process, and even worse, mass homicide. We are all witness to that and will always wonder if these deaths could have been avoided if better/faster access to intervention would have made a difference. A family member knowing a troubled person better than anyone is the first resource to intervene and quickly. Literally a decision of life and death. ERPO will facilitate a positive outcome.

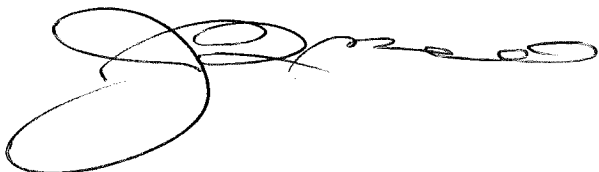
To me, quick action is the key issue. Imagine if you may I am seeing a patient who is having a severe life threatening crisis, but I have to hesitate for clearance to treat said patient. A **decidedly bleak outcome** could be the result. The same issue lies in waiting for court ordered mental health status to be cleared before intervention can be undertaken for a person in crisis. It is painfully clear to see that hesitation can be deadly.

As a Family Physician, it was my responsibility to educate and empower my patients young and old, to be able to live healthy, happy and safe lives. That was my dedicated purpose in practicing medicine. It grieves me to see how unsafe and unprotected our children and adults can be due to lack of common sense laws. Laws that are hurting no one, but are protecting everyone.

That is why I testify today. By voicing in favor of referendum bill LD 1378 I am one physician who values safety, especially for our children. I hope you all share my hope for their future.

I thank you for your time and attention

Respectfully, John C. Brewer, DO, ret.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John C. Brewer', with a large, stylized loop at the beginning and a long, horizontal flourish extending to the right.