

April 21, 2021

**Testimony in Support of LD #759 : An Act To Amend the Child Endangerment Laws
To Include Certain Unauthorized Access to a Loaded Firearm**

Greetings Senator Deschambault, Representative Warren and members of the Criminal Justice & Public Safety Committee. My name is Allison Long and I am writing in strong support of LD #759.

I am a resident of Buckfield and a mother of two elementary-age children. My family owns several firearms and my husband loves to hunt turkeys. Among my children's first birthday presents were lifetime hunting and fishing licenses.

My first parenting experience was as a resource family for the Maine Department of Health and Human Services. Our home study was extensive--we had to replace windows, buy locked storage containers for cleaning supplies, and make sure our firearms were locked, unloaded, in a separate safe from the one holding their ammunition. I assumed that this common-sense requirement for our guns was an expectation of all gun owners in Maine who live with children.

I was shocked and extremely concerned when I found out I was wrong.

Two weeks ago, an elementary school student brought a loaded handgun to school in Richmond, Maine. Miraculously, no one was hurt and both school staff and police responded quickly. When I discussed this incident with friends, we realized that no one would or could be held legally accountable for enabling such a dangerous situation. That conversation led me to sign up as a volunteer with Moms Demand Action and to submit this testimony today.

An estimated 112,300 guns were sold in Maine from March to November 2020, a 68 percent increase compared to the same period in 2019. A study from the American Journal of Public Health found that nationwide, more than half of gun owners do not store all of their firearms securely. An April 2020 study found that 46.8% of adults in Maine have at least one gun at home.

That's over 120,000 households in our state where our children are learning to walk, playing hide & seek, building blanket forts and hosting sleepovers around dangerously unsecured firearms.

We cannot keep exposing our children to such imminent danger. Maine must join the 20 other US states who have passed common-sense responsible storage laws and begin holding each other accountable for safely storing our firearms around children.

Please support LD #759 and vote "ought to pass." Thank you.

Allison Long
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Volunteer, Moms Demand Action