

Mary Owen  
Augusta

My name is Mary Owen. I live in Augusta, Maine. I am writing to ask you to support LD 729, An Act to Amend the Child Endangerment Laws to Include Certain Unauthorized Access to a Loaded Firearm.

On April 6, a student brought a loaded gun to Buker Elementary School in Richmond, Maine. Luckily, injury and death were avoided when the student gave the weapon to a teacher.

However, luck is not a strategy when a loaded gun is in a child's hands.

According to a 2019 article in Harvard Health Publishing, children as young as three years old may be strong enough to pull the trigger on a handgun. In a 2006 article in Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine it was reported that three out of four children (including children less than 10 years old) living in a house with a gun know where the gun is, even when the parents think they don't. Children are inquisitive, daring, and impulsive. They rely on adults to keep them safe. The gun owner has the responsibility to secure a gun so that it is inaccessible to and inoperable by children. There must be explicit and enforceable consequences to the gun owner when failing to do this results in death or injury.

Gun safety legislation is a commonsense strategy to prevent gun-related death and injury and make communities safer. I urge you to support LD 729.