

4/21/2021

Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety

Dear Representative Doudera and members of the Criminal Justice Committee, my name is Janice Vance and I live in Kennebunk. I would like to weigh in as being in favor of LD 759, which expands an existing child endangerment law to help prevent gun owners from leaving unsecured weapons in places where children or teenagers can access them. I am a member of the Moms Demand Action chapter here in Maine, and am raising a grandchild. There is a reason I joined Moms Demand Action.

Before I moved to Maine full-time in 2014, I lived in Connecticut. My office was a mile from Sandy Hook School and in December 2012 my coworkers and I witnessed the murders of 20 beautiful first grade kids and their teachers. The 20-year-old shooter had profound developmental disorders and exhibited a fascination with violent shootings, but his mother, who was a gun enthusiast, never saw fit to lock up the dozen or so weapons kept in a bedroom at their home. After he shot her in the head that December morning, he drove her car to the school, bringing along three semi-automatic firearms, a Glock handgun, a 9mm SIG Sauer handgun, a shotgun, and a huge quantity of ammunition – all easily grabbed from the spare bedroom. He killed the first graders and teachers – and wounded several others – with a Bushmaster XM-15 semi-automatic rifle. As the police began to arrive, he killed himself with the Glock.

If his mother had locked up the weapons, it would have prevented the deaths of 28 people.

When we get up each morning to start our day, none of us ever thinks something terrible is going to happen to us that day. If we did, none of us could function. But there are steps we as a society can take to lessen some risks. One of those is to require gun owners to take the simple common sense step of locking their weapons, removing the ammunition, and locking that ammunition away in a separate place. That prevents teenagers and children from getting access. Moms Demand Action spreads the message about the importance of safe storage, working with responsible gun owners through the Be SMART program. Your help is needed too. Please pass LD 759, and help encourage this act of responsible gun ownership and protect those they love from getting access to unsecured weapons.

Janice Vance  
Kennebunk

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