

Dear Senator Deschambault, Representative Warren and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety,

My name is Gail Witherill , I live in Cumberland and I am writing in support of LD 759-An Act to Amend the Child Endangerment Laws to Include Certain Unauthorized Access to a Loaded Firearm.

As a mother and a grandmother, I am very concerned with a [National Institutes of Health study](#) that shows that among gun owning households with children, 2 out of 10 households store at least one gun loaded and unlocked. This is a recipe for tragedy. Children are naturally curious, and left to their own devices, don't always do what they are told not to do. While home alone or unsupervised, an unlocked, loaded gun is an invitation to a child to check it out, play with it, whether they find it in a bedside table drawer, a closet shelf, or in a backpack. A despondent teen may see a loaded gun as a way out of their misery. We can do better for Maine children.

A [Rand Corporation study published in June 2020](#) "found that child access prevention laws demonstrated the strongest association with subsequent changes in firearms death rates. Child access prevention laws mandate legal penalties for storing a handgun in a manner that allows access by a minor, and some require locked storage of firearms or ammunition. The researchers estimate that such laws are associated with a 6% drop in firearm deaths, and they conclude there is a 97% chance that these laws reduce firearm deaths." LD 759 is such a law and would save lives in Maine. Please support LD 759.

Sincerely,

Gail Witherill