

April 23, 2023

Distinguished members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee of the 131st Maine State Legislature, thank you for taking the time to read this testimony.

My name is Lauren Jacobs, and I am a resident of Old Town. I am writing in support of LD 60: And Act to Require a 72-hour Waiting Period After the Sale of a Firearm.

I am writing in support of LD 60 because legislation such as this could have saved the life of my beloved sister-in-law, Emily. Instead, our family has suffered immense heartache and grief after Emily legally purchased a gun and used it within hours of purchase to commit suicide. She had never before used a gun, or even held a gun, but she walked out of a store - after just a few minutes of walking in - with the gun that would end her life. This was not a planned action; it was a deadly impulse.

This didn't happen in Maine, but it could have, because just like the state where Emily took her life, Maine currently has no waiting period laws. A law like this follows the research, which states that anything that puts "speed bumps" in the way of someone suffering from a suicidal impulse can drastically lower the likelihood that they will attempt suicide.

A 72-hour waiting period doesn't stop someone from purchasing a gun, but it could slow someone down who is purchasing one out of suicidal or violent impulse. That gives family and loved ones more time to intervene, or allows time for the person to seek help or change their mind.

I understand the recreational reasons people enjoy firearms; I was a competitive biathlete and I enjoy target shooting. I understand our second amendment rights. But in our country, we have always attempted to balance individual freedom and rights with the rights of others and the greater good of our communities. I believe this common-sense legislation helps strike that balance.

People opposed to gun safety laws often say that nothing will make a difference. There are already too many guns. Criminals don't follow the laws anyways. But, in what other situations have we collectively looked at a massive problem and just said, "It's too big. There's no way to fix it, so we won't even try"?

When automobile deaths were out of control, we didn't just shrug our shoulders; we developed (and legislated) seatbelts and airbags. When faced with far too many childhood deaths from communicable diseases we developed antibiotics and vaccines. I urge you, our elected officials, to not just shrug your shoulders.

Will LD 60 stop all gun deaths? Of course not. But is it one step towards reducing gun deaths? I believe so.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lauren Jacobs". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Lauren Jacobs