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Testimony in support of LD 1340 – ‘An Act to Prohibit the Sale or Possession of Rapid-fire Modification Devices’

Honorable Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Salisbury and Members of the Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety, my name is Alyssa Goodwin, M.D. I am a pediatrician and parent in Brunswick, and a member of the board of directors for the Maine Academy of Pediatrics and co - chair of their school health committee.

When our communities are safe, we can go about our daily activities and access opportunities with comfort and without the fear, threat, or reality of violence harming us and our loved ones. As a pediatrician I counsel children and families on safety and wellness every day. In many aspects of child health, we have made gains in reducing the burden of injury and death, such as in the case of motor vehicles accidents. Laws passed in Maine have focused on evidence-based legislation to promote and require developmentally appropriate child and adolescent car safety. This proactive legislation has led to a decrease in pediatric deaths due to Motor vehicle accidents.

The opposite is true for gun violence in our state and across the country. We have a real problem with gun violence. In 2023 alone, the United States has experienced over 150 mass shootings, making mass casualty gun violence nearly a daily occurrence in the US. Last year the US experienced 647 mass shootings, of which 21 involved 5 or more fatalities. Mass shooting occur in every imaginable setting, urban, suburban, rural, schools, churches, public setting and in homes.

Last year firearms surpassed accidents and became the leading cause of death for children aged 1-19. This is an unacceptable statistic. The US is the only country among its peers experiencing this staggering and tragic statistic. This statistic is even more tragic because these deaths are preventable. LD1340 is a practical and common-sense law aimed at limiting post- sale modifications to transform a semi- automatic weapon into an automatic weapon capable of firing hundreds of rounds in minutes.

The number of shootings involving automatic weapons has skyrocketed since 2019, with a 1400% increase between 2019- 2020. This trend has not slowed down since 2020. Many recent high profile mass shootings have involved automatic weapons made illegally with post sale modifications. We have learned that when we create common sense laws for safety, we prevent injury and death.

LD1340 is about safety and protecting lives. This is why I am asking your support in voting Ought to Pass on LD 1340.