

Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer, and distinguished members of the Health and Human Services Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of LD 1392, “An Act Directing the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention to Release Annually Public Health Data Regarding Certain Fatalities and Hospitalizations”.

As a professional librarian and graduate student pursuing a policy-focused master’s degree in social work at the University of New England, I understand the importance of a scientific, data-driven public health approach to firearm violence – from research to prevention, risk management to evaluation. Only with a robust and standardized set of data can researchers and policymakers guide the achievement of intended goals of public health programs.

Gathering and publicly disseminating morbidity and mortality information is an essential public health responsibility – it is as necessary to effective firearm injury prevention in Maine as it is to smoking cessation programs or reduction of automobile accidents. Everyone benefits from the regular collection and broad availability of data regarding firearms morbidity and mortality, as this data is used to create developmentally and culturally appropriate public health interventions; aid law enforcement agencies in gun violence abatement; and support suicide prevention programming across the state.

Regardless of an individual’s position on the gun control debate, we should all be able to agree that research-driven approaches to combating injuries and deaths due to firearms is the most effective way to advance public health and gun safety in our communities.

A number of professional organizations, including the [American Medical Association](#) and [American Psychological Association](#), advocate for increased investment in funding for state-level data collection and research to inform state and national health policy. It is my hope that you will respond to this urgent public health crisis – one that is killing our fellow Mainers – with legislation that creates a foundation for empirical evidence and data-driven policymaking.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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