

Testimony of Maura Pillsbury 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

Senator Claxton, Representative Meyer, and members of the Health and Human Services Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. My name is Maura Pillsbury. I am a volunteer with the ME Chapter of Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America and a resident of Freeport. I am testifying in support of LD 1392.

As a former researcher for this legislature, I understand the importance of making evidence-based decisions. This bill will help us do just that. Consistent data allow public health agencies and other entities to better gauge the scope of a problem, identify high-risk groups, and monitor the effects of prevention programs and policies. It is important to have timely and reliable data to monitor the extent of the problem and to evaluate the impact of prevention efforts. Data is also necessary for prevention planning and implementation.

For far too long, the federal government failed to fund any research on preventing gun violence. Now, sadly, gun violence is a public health crisis in America. There is a demonstrated need for additional research to guide policy-making, and that includes data collection. LD 1392 will help ensure the state of Maine has clearly defined data collection procedures that are a crucial part of reducing gun violence in our state.

As a mother of two young children and a local elected official, I have watched with growing concern as gun violence has escalated in Maine and around the country. In an average year, 249 people are shot and killed or wounded in Maine. That is about five people every week. The traumatic impact of these tragedies ripples across our small and close-knit communities.

We must track information about these incidents of firearm death and injury to understand and address the problem we are dealing with. The information collected by this proposed law will further our understanding of gun violence and its impact in Maine, and help us understand how we can prevent it. Research and data are integral to prevention, but without adequate resources, researchers are prevented from thoroughly examining gun violence and gun policies. You can help change that by supporting LD 1392. Thank you.