

Sen. Carney, Rep. Kuhn, Members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Maggie Amann. I am a 20-year-old Bates College student in Lewiston, Maine, and I grew up my whole life in Scarborough, Maine. I am writing in support of LD: 766 to prohibit rapid-fire devices and machinegun conversion devices that can greatly accelerate a gun's normal fire rate, thus making it much more lethal.

On the evening of October 25th just last year, it was 1 am in Spain and I was a month and a half into my study abroad experience. I woke up at 1 am to a numerous number of texts from my friends at Bates. They were terrified. There was an active shooter in our home. I was alone, watching the news, texting friends, scared shitless that the people I love, my peers, professors, and students I work with in the community, were dead. I stayed up all night, not sleeping an hour at all. I was checking in on my friends, sobbing in bed, and listening to the news as I felt so distant and terrified for the people I love.

People thought it could never happen. Growing up in a country where there is nearly a school shooting each week, and 12 children die each day from gun violence in America (Sandy Hook Promise), guns were not an unknown entity to me. That being said, I had never truly feared that gun violence would impact me personally. I thought I was safe. Nobody I knew owned a gun, and Maine had been relatively safe in the past. However, I realized on October 25th that there had been a huge failure in my state, and the laws to protect people from guns don't exist. I lost more faith in our laws and government than I ever have. People I love lost people. Kids I know lost their parents. Nobody gained a thing from that day. Nobody gains from a mass shooting. It's not worth it. There are so many ways to further protect people from guns. What is being done presently is not working.

I skipped school that Thursday in Spain and attempted to explain why. How could I explain the sense of loss, fear, guilt, and anger, to a country where guns are not a daily fear? Guns don't take up space in their minds because people don't use them. They couldn't conceptualize what had happened in my home. My distinct memory from that day was learning the word for "mass shooting" in Spanish. It's not one that's used frequently. It's "Tiroteo," in case you were wondering.

The devastation of a tragedy of that magnitude is something inexplicable. Guns are one of the biggest issues facing America. Systems that were made to protect us are failing. There are things that can be done.

I'm still grieving and I've thought about the shooting every single day since October 25. I'm still learning about how to move forward. I live in immense fear that more innocent people will be taken from this world for no reason. There are ways to reduce gun violence. Prohibiting the

possession of a rapid-fire device and changing the statutory definition of “Machine Gun” is a step in the right direction. This cannot continue. It is your duty and responsibility to protect people.

Thank you,
Maggie Amann