

Margaret Duhamel
Woolwich
LD 208

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn and members of the committee, my name is Peg Duhamel and I live in Woolwich. I am a retired primary care doctor and have lived in Maine for 37 years. My husband own several guns and we are both gun safety advocates.

I am writing in opposition to LD 208 and 1230, LD 1062

The legislature voted in these laws for good reason. They are now being opposed only because the gun lobby is emboldened by the current US administrations disregard for the common sense laws and institutions of this country.

Japan boasts a population of more than 127 million people, yet finished 2019 with a gun death rate of only .02 per 100,000 people. One major factor in this success is that Japan has some of the strictest gin control laws in the world. For Japanese citizens to purchase a gun, they must attend an all-day class, pass a written exam, and complete a shooting range test, scoring at least 95% accuracy. Candidates will also receive a mental health evaluation, performed at a hospital, and will have a comprehensive background check done by the government. Only shotguns and rifles can be purchased. The class and exam must be retaken every three years.

In 2023, the gun death rate in the U.S. was 13.7 deaths per 100,000 people. 683 times that of Japan. The US gun suicide rate is currently at its all-time high, with 7.6 deaths per 100,000 in 2023.

According to the Everytown Research and Policy website, when they compared the states head-to-head on the top 50 gun safety policies, a clear pattern emerged. States with strong laws see less gun violence. Indeed, the states that have failed to put basic protections into place have a rate of gun deaths two and a half times higher than the states that are national gun safety leaders. (<https://everytownresearch.org/rankings/>) All states should start with a core group of five foundational laws—passing background checks and/or purchase permitting, along with Extreme Risk laws and secure gun storage requirements, 72 hour waiting periods; and rejecting Shoot First (also known as Stand Your Ground) and permitless carry laws. While each of the top 16 states in the gun law rankings has all five of these policies in place, only one of the bottom 18 states has even one of these critical protections.

I have to wait weeks to get my passport. I have to wait any number of days or weeks to get a permit to build onto my house. I have to wait 2 days to get a purchase from Amazon because something that is critical to my safety like a security camera or alarm or pepper spray was not available at a local store... Waiting 72 hours to receive a purchased gun does not infringe on anyone's rights. It has a significant potential to save lives, both from gun violence and suicide. Thank you.