

Julie Orrego
Portland, Maine
April 16, 2025

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Julie Orrego, and I am writing to express my strong opposition to LD 208, An Act to Eliminate the 72-Hour Waiting Period on Firearm Purchases.

The 72-hour waiting period is not an arbitrary delay but a proven, life-saving measure. Removing this critical buffer would needlessly endanger Mainers by increasing the risk of impulsive acts of violence, including suicide and homicide.

According to a 2017 study published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, states that implemented waiting periods saw a 17% reduction in gun homicides and a 7–11% reduction in gun suicides. The study estimates that nationwide, waiting periods prevent approximately 750 gun deaths per year.

Firearm suicides are of particular concern in Maine. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), about 89% of all gun deaths in Maine in recent years have been suicides. Suicide is often an impulsive act: one study published in *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior* found that 24% of suicide attempt survivors acted within 5 minutes of deciding to attempt, and 70% acted within an hour. A 72-hour pause could be the difference between life and death.

The public widely supports waiting periods. A 2023 Gallup poll showed that 78% of Americans support mandatory waiting periods for all gun purchases. Mainers, like most Americans, believe in responsible gun ownership—and that includes taking commonsense steps to prevent violence.

Waiting periods do not infringe on Second Amendment rights. The U.S. Supreme Court has repeatedly acknowledged that reasonable regulations, like background checks and waiting periods, are constitutionally sound. The 72-hour wait is a minimal inconvenience for those purchasing a firearm for sport or self-defense, but it is a crucial safeguard against preventable tragedies.

I urge this committee to reject LD 208. In a time when communities across our state are seeking solutions to gun violence and suicide, this bill would take us in the wrong direction. The lives of our friends, neighbors, and family members are worth the wait.

Thank you for your time and your service to the people of Maine.

Sincerely,
Julie Orrego