



Maine Medical  
Association



**Testimony of Maine Public Health Association,  
Maine Medical Association,  
Maine Osteopathic Association, and  
Maine Chapter-American Academy of Pediatrics**

**IN SUPPORT OF:**

**LD 1379: An Act to Require Public Health Warnings to Be Posted and Provided by Firearm Dealers and Gunsmiths**

Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary  
State House, Room 438  
Thursday, May 1, 2025

Good morning, Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary. On behalf of Maine Public Health Association (MPHA), Maine Medical Association (MMA), Maine Osteopathic Association (MOA), and Maine Chapter-American Academy of Pediatrics (MAAP), we write in support of LD 1379: “An Act to Require Public Health Warnings to Be Posted and Provided by Firearm Dealers and Gunsmiths.”

MPHA is the state’s oldest, largest, and most diverse association for public health professionals. MPHA represents more than 850 individuals and 70 organizational members across the state. MPHA’s mission is to advance the health of all people and places in Maine. MMA is a professional organization representing over 4,000 physicians, residents, and medical students in Maine. MMA’s mission is to support Maine physicians, advance the quality of medicine in Maine, and promote the health of all Maine people. MOA is a professional organization representing more than 1,200 osteopathic physicians, residents, and medical students in Maine whose mission is to serve the Osteopathic profession of the State of Maine through a coordinated effort of professional education, advocacy, and member services to ensure the availability of quality osteopathic health care to the people of this State. Maine AAP is a membership organization of 300 pediatricians and subspecialists across the state working to promote the health of Maine children.

LD 1379 would require firearm dealers and gunsmiths to post a public health warning statement in their stores that includes information about the increased risk of suicide, domestic violence fatalities and unintentional deaths, particularly among children, when there are guns in the home. The statement would also remind purchasers to keep firearms locked and unloaded and provides the phone number for the state’s suicide and crisis services lines. Accompanying brochures would be developed by the Maine Department of Health and Human Services.

Violence in America, and here in Maine, is a public health crisis that affects people in all stages of life, from infancy to older adults. It leaves physical and emotional scars, derails lives, and erodes communities by reducing productivity, decreasing property values, and disrupting social services.<sup>1</sup> Violence is also a vicious cycle – if someone is exposed to violence, they’re more likely to commit future violence.<sup>2</sup> Violence is a leading cause of premature death and disability in the U.S., and here in Maine.

Data show that different types of violence tend to co-occur, such that in areas where there are higher rates of community-level gun violence there are also higher rates of domestic violence and child abuse. At the community level, gun violence tends to occur more often in areas already experiencing social and economic

disparities, including geographic racial segregation and concentrated poverty.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, childhood trauma, including domestic violence and community violence, may be a risk factor for gun violence later in life.<sup>4</sup> A public health approach to violence prevention fosters healthy gender norms and relationships, bolsters trauma-informed services, limits access to firearms, and works to mitigate racism by changing norms and behaviors; collectively, these efforts lead to reductions in violence.<sup>5</sup>

### Violence in the U.S.

- According to the [Gun Violence Archive](#), in 2024, there were 503 mass shootings, and 667 murder-suicides, in the U.S. Nearly 17,000 individuals lost their lives due to gun violence last year.
- To date ([April 30, 2025](#)), in the U.S., 4,600 people have died by gun violence, including 400 youth ages 0-17 years.
- Firearms remain the leading cause of death for children and teens.<sup>6</sup>

### Violence in Maine:

- In 2023, 18.3% of middle schoolers reported that violence in their home, or the threat of violence, made them want to leave home, even if only for a short while.<sup>7</sup>
- Domestic violence represented 29% of total reported assaults in 2022.<sup>8</sup>
- 1 in 5 Mainers will experience sexual assault during their lifetime.<sup>9</sup>
- According to the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention, nearly 89% of firearm fatalities in 2021 were suicides, a rate significantly higher than the national average.<sup>10</sup>
- One of the deadliest mass shootings in America occurred here in Maine, claiming 19 people's lives.

Gun violence is not inevitable. It can be prevented through a comprehensive public health approach that keeps families and communities safe, while respecting responsible gun owners. Providing education about public health considerations associated with gun ownership, including how to access resources, is fundamental to good health.

We believe this bill is protective of public health. As such, we respectfully request you to vote LD 1379 “Ought to Pass.” Thank you for your consideration.

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2020. [Violence prevention: A public health issue](#).

<sup>2</sup> Weaver CM, Borkowski JG, Whitman TL. Violence breeds violence: Childhood exposure and adolescent conduct problems. *J Community Psychol*. 2008;36(1):96–112.

<sup>3</sup> Santilli A, O'Connor Duffany K, Carroll-Scott A, Thomas J, Greene A, Arora A, Agnoli A, Gan G, & Ickovics J. 2017. [Bridging the response to mass shootings and urban violence: Exposure to violence in New Haven, Connecticut](#). *American Journal of Public Health*;107:374-379.

<sup>4</sup> Wamser-Nanney R, Nanney JT, Conrad E, Constans JJ. 2019. [Childhood trauma exposure and gun violence risk factors among victims of gun violence](#). *Psychol Trauma*;11(1):99-106.

<sup>5</sup> American Public Health Association. 2018. [Violence is a public health issue: Public health is essential to understanding and treating violence in the U.S.](#)

<sup>6</sup> Villarreal S, Kim R, Wagner E, Somayaji N, Davis A & Crifasi CK. 2024. Gun violence in the United States 2022: Examining the burden among children and teens. Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions. Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

<sup>7</sup> Maine Department of Health and Human Services & Maine Department of Education. 2023. [Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey Middle School Report](#).

<sup>8</sup> State of Maine Department of Public Safety. 2022. [Crime in Maine 2022](#).

<sup>9</sup> Dumont R & Shaler G. 2015. Maine Crime Victimization Report: Informing public policy for safer communities. Muskie School of Public Service, University of Southern Maine.

<sup>10</sup> Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Maine DHHS. Feb 2023. [Report pursuant to 22 MRS, Ch. 256-A §1425](#).