

June 11, 2025

“Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and esteemed members of the committee. My name is Robin Brooks and I live in Topsham. I respectfully testify in support of LD 1378: An Act to Protect Maine Communities by Enacting the Extreme Risk Protection Order Act.”

Here are some facts--the Safe Schools Safe Communities initiative will save lives and help keep our kids, families, and communities safe. Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPO's) will allow both families and law enforcement to petition a court to temporarily restrict someone's access to dangerous weapons when they're in crisis. Family members are often the first to know when a loved one is in crisis and potentially poses a threat to themselves or others. Empowering them to take action through a court will help save lives and prevent future tragedies.

Maine's current law is ineffective and failed to prevent the tragedy in Lewiston. My family suffered in fear under the lockdown, as our home is just a few miles from Lisbon where the body of the shooter was ultimately found. The report by the Lewiston Commission was clear that Maine's "yellow flag law" is cumbersome, weak, ineffective, and failed, despite multiple people close to the shooter reporting that he was in crisis.

Our current law disempowers family members by not allowing them to take direct action when a loved one is in crisis and poses a threat to themselves or others. If they're able to get help, it too often comes too late. We must all come together to support this common sense proposal to close the loopholes in our current laws that have led to tragic loss of life and devastated families and communities.

Did you know that firearms are now the leading cause of death for American children and teens? What an abysmal statistic, one we should all be ashamed of. Twenty-one other states have used these laws to disarm people who threatened school shootings. We must take every step we can to protect our children. These types of laws are also effective in reducing incidents of suicide – the leading cause of firearm death in Maine, especially among men. Allowing a family member to petition for temporary removal of a gun from a person in crisis is not only compassionate but will save lives.

I am supporting this simple straightforward bill that will save lives. Please take decisive action and support LD 1378 unanimously. We, the people of Maine deserve a sense of safety in our homes and communities. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Robin E. Brooks

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Notes: The law we currently have on the books in Maine is not an Extreme Risk Protection Order law – it is the only law of its kind in the nation, disempowers family members from getting help and preventing tragedies, and failed to prevent the tragedy in Lewiston.

The ERPO ballot measure preserves identical due process protections to Maine's current law – any claim to the contrary is simply false.

21 other states (<https://everytownresearch.org/rankings/law/extreme-risk-law/>) and Washington, D.C. have ERPO laws, which have been upheld in court when challenged, and the Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of these types of laws (United States v. Rahimi).

Northeastern states that have ERPOs include Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island.