

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and members of the Committee on Judiciary,

My name is Grace Leavitt. I live in Raymond. I am writing as a retired educator, a mother, and a grandmother in strong support of the referendum bill LD 1378, “An Act to Protect Maine Communities by Enacting the Extreme Risk Protection Order Act”.

We already knew that firearms are, tragically, the leading cause of death for children and teens in our country. And now, just yesterday, a report in the Journal of American Medical Association (JAMA Pediatrics <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapediatrics/article-abstract/2834530>) concluded that pediatric firearm mortality increased more in states with permissive laws. And also just yesterday, another deadly school shooting occurred—yes, in another country, in Austria, which reportedly has the most ‘relaxed’ gun laws in Europe (<https://time.com/7292837/austria-shooting-gun-ownership-laws/>).

Too frequently, seemingly every day, there is another tragic death by gun violence in the news—earlier this week in Las Vegas.

While we may not be able to entirely prevent yet another tragedy, an Extreme Risk Protection Order Law will go a long way towards reducing the possibility of senseless death by firearms. ERPOs have been **proven** to reduce suicide and have been **proven** to have helped prevent mass shootings (The Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law <https://jaapl.org/content/early/2024/08/27/JAAPL.240056-24> and Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence: <https://giffords.org/lawcenter/gun-laws/policy-areas/who-can-have-a-gun/extreme-risk-protection-orders/#:~:text=Properly%20implemented%20and%20utilized%20extreme,and%20credible%20threats%20of%20violence>).

I sincerely hope that we do what we can to keep our children, our students, our communities safe.

I fully support this referendum bill.

Thank you for your time and your work this session.

Grace Leavitt