

Bonnie Sand  
Round Pond  
LD 1378

Good afternoon and thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify about the Extreme Risk Protection Order.

I have a personal story regarding the risk of firearms in the hands of family that I would like to tell you.

I am a retired geriatric physician. Several years ago I was taking piano lessons from an 88 year-old in my neighborhood. At the end of a lesson she told me that her adult son was in her basement and high on drugs. She told me that he had been experimenting in the garage with chemicals, manufacturing methamphetamine. She also told me that he had a criminal record. She told me that he had several firearms, one of which was a semi-automatic weapon, that were in a closet, unlocked. I looked down her stairs and saw a man wearing no clothing waving his arms strangely. I found this terrifying. I tried to convince my teacher that we needed to leave immediately but she would not leave without her purse, which was in the room downstairs near where her son was. She said he wouldn't hurt anyone and wouldn't leave without the purse. I didn't want her to be in danger, so I went down the stairs and retrieved her purse. I was scared to death. We went outside and called law enforcement. About an hour later a deputy came. I asked him to take the firearms out of her house, which were in a closet upstairs. He told me that he couldn't because he "had no right to do so, because no crime had been committed." Our only recourse, he told us, was to leave the house and begin a process of a protection order against him. This required affidavits and a court hearing.

This process felt dangerous and inadequate. If an ERPO were available we could have requested the firearms be removed, lowering the risk to an elderly woman whose son was incapacitated on drugs and to myself who was there to help.

We need an ERPO in Maine to reduce the risk of firearm death and injury to innocent family members. The current yellow flag process is too difficult to use in an emergent situation.

Please support this bill that saves lives and is the law in 22 states in our union. The voters have a right to weigh in on this in November.

Thank you