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Testimony in favor of LD 1378 from Sydney R. Sewall, MD (Hallowell)

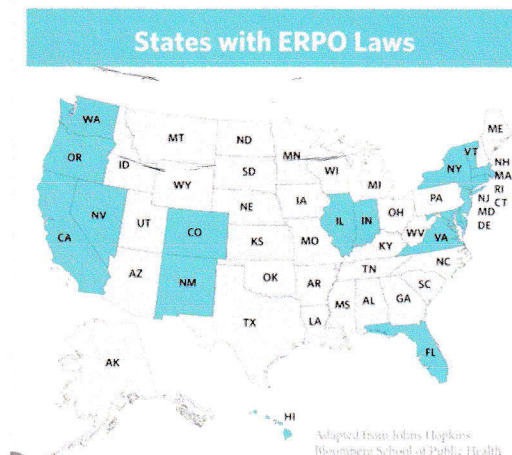
Sen. Carney, Rep. Kuhn and members of the Judiciary Committee:

I'm writing as a member of the Maine Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, and as a private citizen. Over my 40+ years of practicing pediatrics in the central Maine area, I've witnessed a huge shift in the pathologies that are affecting public health. When I started here in the early 1980's, most of our attention was focused on identifying and preventing serious infections. Now the focus is the early identification of developmental and psychological impairments with the hope of improving function as adults.

Public health statistics suggest we have been very successful in our battle against infections (more and better vaccinations) but failing in our struggle to promote resilience and mental health. It is very saddening to note that firearms now kill more kids than motor vehicle accidents or cancers. Homicides, suicides and accidental shooting deaths seem to be regular events even in Maine.

The current yellow flag law just has too many hoops to jump through to do its job. It seems likely that Lewiston would not have happened if we had an **ERPO** in place. Experience with similar legislation in other states shows that ERPO's have not been excessively burdensome to legitimate gun owners and passage of this legislation does not threaten Maine's hunting tradition.

Gun rights advocates are partly correct when they say that "guns don't kill people, people kill people," When the potential perpetrator is in some type of crisis, however, preventing access to firearms can be lifesaving.



I hope Maine does the right thing and joins these states by enacting an ERPO.

Sincerely,

Sydney R. Sewall, MD MPH

Hallowell