



## **SAM-ILA**

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### Testimony In Opposition

LD 2238, An Act to Address Gun Violence in Maine by Requiring a Waiting Period for Certain Firearm Purchases

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary

Presented by David Trahan, Executive Director of the Sportsman's Alliance of Maine, Institute for Legislative Action

March 7, 2023

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary, my name is David Trahan. I am the Executive Director of the Sportsman's Alliance of Maine - Institute for Legislative Action (SAM-ILA), testifying in opposition to LD 2238, An Act to Address Gun Violence in Maine by Requiring a Waiting Period for Certain Firearm Purchases.

"I hope someone comes to your house and shoots you in the face, I hope you die." That is just one of the threats or horrible messages I received a few days after the Lewiston shooting. This threat was the most chilling as it referred to coming to my home and murdering me. I shared the threat with the FBI, Department of Public Safety, and the Augusta Police. Unfortunately, what I got for support was, "there is not much we can do." Nothing was done. I was on my own.

We live in a society now where people take out their political frustrations with violence. We have seen it at churches and Congressional softball games. Death threats have become disturbingly common. Every day, domestic violence assaults, road rage incidents, crime of all sorts occur in all corners of the state. Like many, I decided not to be a victim and purchased a firearm for self-defense.

If this law passed, I, and others like me become more vulnerable to violence and we lose our freedom to protect ourselves and family when we need it the most.

This excerpt from a SAM Member letter is timely, "Hello Mr. Trahan, I am a long time SAM member and the uncle of Bill and Aaron Young who were both brutally murdered by the coward Robert Card. I want to thank both you and your colleagues for continuing to fight for our

2nd amendment rights. Bill was a US Air Force veteran and a staunch supporter of our right to bear arms. Bill did conceal carry, but unfortunately on the day he was killed he was following the request of the bowling alley and left his firearm at home. Would have the outcome been different had he been armed?"

When Robert Card was on the loose, armed, and dangerous, do you believe it would have been fair to ask Mainers to wait 72 hours to buy a gun to protect their family?

This simple statement from SAM member, Steve Young illustrates what can happen when people's right to self-defense is taken away, in this legislation for three days, when it is needed the most.

Do not bother to tell me the presence of a gun makes it more dangerous for the victim, or the gun is more likely to be used against me. There are many reasons people need or want a firearm. In some cases, people buy a gun to recreationally shoot or collect. In some cases, like mine, and countless others, they buy one to protect themselves and their family under legitimate threats of violence. It is not your right to dismiss my liberty and safety to satisfy your fear of firearms.

There are more reasons to oppose this bill. Each year, dozens of gun shows are held across the state. Licensed dealers, Fish and Game Clubs conduct gun shows. Some of you may like the idea of destroying gun shows, but I can tell you the communities that hold the shows will not appreciate it. They follow the law, conduct background checks and in many cases, use the proceeds of shows to pay for gun safety programs.

This legislation also turns the Federal National Instant Criminal Check System on its head. The NICS check is a prevention tool, meant to prevent the sale of a firearm to a prohibited felon or those adjudicated as mentally incompetent. The National Instant Check System (NICS) is designed to impose as little imposition on a person's liberty as possible. Hence, "Instant" referenced in the name of the program.

This proposed legislation serves no public purpose, except to interfere with a law-abiding citizen's right to self-defense. I encourage the committee to give it an Ought Not to Pass report.

Thank you,

David Trahan, Executive Director, SAM-ILA