

Thank you Chairs and Members of this Committee for your service and for the opportunity address you this morning.

My name is Kathleen McFadden. I am the Maine Volunteer Chapter Leader for Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense, and I live in Gouldsboro. I know that pain that gun violence causes. My family has been impacted by a shooting that left my brother scarred and traumatized. But I am here today to share a different story, one that speak directly to LD 379. It is a story that a mother just like me pleaded with me to tell.

Several years ago, when I began this work, I attended a pediatric resident conference at Mass General Hospital in Boston. The purpose of the conference was to educate young physicians about the public health crisis of gun deaths in children. I met a woman just like me, middle age (back then), living in the suburbs, and raising her children.

Her name was Ann Marie Crowell. On Christmas Eve day, her 16-year-old son Brian went next door to hang with his friend. His friend showed him a gun he had found hidden under a mattress. The gun went off and hit Brian. Ann Marie had planned to spend Christmas Eve celebrating like she always had with her husband, children, and extended family of sisters, uncles, lots of cousins and grandparents. Instead of gathering around her tree, the family gathered around Brian's hospital bed holding vigil. On Christmas Day, instead of opening gifts and watching her children's surprise and delight she and her husband were faced with picking out a casket and planning Brian's funeral.

Approximately 4.6 million kids live in homes with guns that are loaded and unlocked¹. Most kids, just like Brian's friend, know where their parents' guns are kept. Close to 1500 children are killed each year, that is an average of 4/day and 2-3 times more are injured and disabled. Kids, yes kids are dying by homicide, gun suicide, and accidental discharge like the kindergartener from Scarborough, and 10-year-old boy from Oakland. Most school shooters like those in Denver this week, get their guns from home. I fully support the 2nd amendment and the right to bear arms but believe that right comes great responsibility. I respectfully ask you to support LD 379.

Kathleen McFadden
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