

MAINE



PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

May 9, 2019

To: Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety

From: The Maine Psychological Association

Re: LD 379, An Act To Protect Children by Requiring the Safe Storage of Loaded Firearms

The Maine Psychological Association is a membership organization representing psychologists in Maine who work in private practice, at Maine's colleges and universities, and in the public sector. Our mission is to advance psychology as a science, as a profession, and as a means of promoting health and human welfare.

The Maine Psychological Association views gun violence from a public health and safety standpoint and in 2018 signed on to a "Call for Action to Prevent Gun Violence in the United States of America" which was penned by the Interdisciplinary Group on Preventing School and Community Violence, and is supported by hundreds of professional associations, colleges and businesses. One section with which we wholeheartedly agree states:

"We need a change in mindset and policy from reaction to prevention...we need a comprehensive public health approach to gun violence that is informed by scientific evidence and free from partisan politics."

LD 379 focuses on enforcing ways to prevent children from accessing firearms. We believe that even small steps like posting warnings where firearms are sold can potentially protect us from some disastrous gun incidents, and the trauma that may result. Trauma, the emotional response to an extremely negative event, can have effects that can be so severe that they interfere with an individual's ability to live a normal life for years to come.

We urge you to support LD 379. Thank you.