

Testimony given at April 22, 2019 hearing on LD 1312

Elders for Future Generations supports passage of the Red Flag Bill

My name is Fred Brancato, and I'm testifying on behalf of Elders for Future Generations in support of the Red Flag Bill.

Elders for Future Generations is a large and ever-growing network of older people concerned about the kind of world we leave for all who will follow us. Our focus is on public policies related to the environment, war and peace, democracy, health care, education, immigration and gun safety.

As Elders, we fully support the Red Flag Bill, because it is an effective, common sense way to keep guns out of the hands of those who are deemed dangerous to themselves and others, while at the same time protecting second amendment rights of gun owners.

Upon careful examination of the bill's language, we think the implementation process is well thought-out and maintains due process so that no person's human rights are violated. Family members and law enforcement officers would be able to petition the courts for "extreme risk protection orders," and the court system would seek "clear and convincing evidence" to determine "probable cause" in making its decisions within reasonably brief timeframes.

Implementation of red flag laws in 13 states have shown significant success in saving lives. In addition to the role guns have played in mass killings and domestic violence which plague our country, we are especially concerned about the prominent role guns play in suicides. Over 50% of suicide attempts are gun related and fatal 85% of the time. Of those who survive, only 10% attempt suicide again. As one of the elders in our network put it: "Removing guns (the most lethal means of killing oneself) temporarily from an individual who has signs of suicidal intent, which is often a temporary state, is a major public health technique with no down side." We would also note that 8 out of 10 people who commit suicide show signs of intent beforehand.

To help save the lives of Maine residents from misuse of firearms (while respecting 2nd amendment rights) we urge you to pass LD 1312.

Thank you.