



To: **Committee on Judiciary**
State House, Room 438
Augusta, ME 04333

Re: **LD 2238 (SP 958) - An Act to Address Gun Violence in Maine by
Requiring a Waiting Period for Certain Firearm Purchases**

Position: **Oppose**

Date: **March 6, 2024**

Honorable Members of Committee on Judiciary,

My name is Fred Bird, and I am the Manager for the Northeastern States for the Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation (CSF). I respectfully urge you to oppose Legislative Docket 2238 (LD 2238) An Act to Address Gun Violence in Maine by Requiring a Waiting Period for Certain Firearm Purchases – legislation that imposes a minimum three-day waiting period on the transferring of a firearm. The implementation of a three-day waiting period creates a biased barrier on the hunting and sporting community alone; no other outdoor sporting traditions are subjected to such biases. Such barriers can create unintended consequences that directly affect wildlife management funding and participation in Maine’s sporting traditions, a major economic driver in the Vacation Land.

Founded in 1989, CSF is the informed authority across outdoor issues and serves as the primary conduit for influencing public policy. Working with the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus (CSC), the Governors Sportsmen's Caucus (GSC), and the National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucuses (NASC), CSF gives a voice to hunters, anglers, recreational shooters, and trappers on Capitol Hill and throughout state capitols advocating on vital outdoor issues that are the backbone of our nation's conservation legacy.

Sportsmen and women have been a driving force behind ensuring the integrity of lawful firearms ownership is maintained. Under federal law, Federal Firearms License holders are required to perform a Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) check on the firearms purchaser/transferee prior to the transferring of a firearm. The sportsmen’s community was the primary driver of critical legislation at both the state and federal levels to ensure the NICS process is as effective as possible by incentivizing states to provide accurate and updated records of prohibited persons to the FBI.

Along with supporting strong background check processes for FFLs, for more than 85 years, sportsmen and women have been the primary funders of state-level conservation efforts in Maine and are thus an important constituency that provide benefits for all Maine's residents. Enacted in 1937, the Pittman-Robertson Act redirected previously existing excise taxes on firearms and ammunition to a dedicated fund to be used specifically for wildlife conservation purposes. These critical conservation dollars fund a variety of efforts including enhanced fish and wildlife habitat and populations, recreational access to public and private lands, shooting ranges and boat access facilities, wetlands protection and its associated water filtration and flood retention functions, and improved soil and water conservation – all which benefit the public at large, not just sportsmen and women. Imposing a three-day minimum waiting period on the transferring of a firearm is a slight to the many benefits provided by the sporting industry.

Not only is the possession of firearms protected under the Second Amendment, but it is also engrained in our nation's cultural fabric. Sportsmen and women in Maine have been at the forefront with offering improvements towards determining one's eligibility in purchasing a firearm, but the three-day waiting period implemented by this bill is not a constructive route to take. Through implementing a delay in the transfer of a firearm, LD 2238 would create a uniquely biased hurdle on the hunting and sport shooting communities – a barrier levied on no other outdoor user experience. Maine's sportsmen and women are the backbone of the funding structure for conservation efforts that benefit fish, wildlife, and their habitat throughout the state, as well as the citizenry at large.

Furthermore, the proposed waiting period would likely discourage the sale of firearms by lawful users, as sportsmen and women would be inconvenienced by having to make multiple trips to their dealer, unintentionally driving business to a neighboring state.

In recognition of the negative bearings that LD 2238 would have on Maine's sportsmen and women, CSF stands in firm opposition. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this issue. Should you require additional information on this, or other sportsmen-related topics, please feel free to contact me at any time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Fred Bird', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Fred Bird
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