



# **SOCIAL ACTION RESOURCE GUIDE 2024**

*A directory of resources on issues of Social Justice and an overview of the workings of the Social Action Committee of the Maine Conference United Church of Christ...*

# Social Action Committee 2024

John Brooking (Cumberland) [johnbrooking4@gmail.com](mailto:johnbrooking4@gmail.com)  
Linda Depew (Katahdin) [ldepew@fairpoint.net](mailto:ldepew@fairpoint.net)  
Alice Duston (Sunrise) [aliceduston1944@gmail.com](mailto:aliceduston1944@gmail.com)  
Debbie Duval (Cumberland) [debbie@highstreet-ucc.org](mailto:debbie@highstreet-ucc.org)  
Chair - Stephen Hastings (Katahdin) [stephenh11656@gmail.com](mailto:stephenh11656@gmail.com)  
Ian Lynch (Living Water) [revianlynch@gmail.com](mailto:revianlynch@gmail.com)  
Hannah Mondrach (Sunrise) [hannah.mondrach@gmail.com](mailto:hannah.mondrach@gmail.com)  
Dianne Morse-Leonard (Oxford Union) [dmorseleonard@gmail.com](mailto:dmorseleonard@gmail.com)  
Kathy Woodside (Sunrise) [woodsidekat@gmail.com](mailto:woodsidekat@gmail.com)

**Contact the members of the Social Action Committee if you have:**

- Additional resources you would like to have included in this guide
- Questions about the information contained in this guide
- About social justice issues the committee has not yet addressed

## MAINE CONFERENCE STAFF

Reverend Marisa Laviola [mlaviola@maineucc.org](mailto:mlaviola@maineucc.org) – Conference Minister

Rev. John Fiscus - [jfiscus@maineucc.org](mailto:jfiscus@maineucc.org) – Associate Conference Minister

Nancy Bartlett [nbartlett@maineucc.org](mailto:nbartlett@maineucc.org) - Treasury Assistant

Kimberly Poisson [kdonovan-poisson@maineucc.org](mailto:kdonovan-poisson@maineucc.org) - Office Manager

### SPECIAL THANKS TO...

The leadership of our Associations and the pastors and church members throughout the Maine who contribute time, talent and provide resources to the Maine Conference United Church of Christ

AND for their guidance and assistance in gathering information for this document.

**DISCLAIMER:** The Social Action Committee apologizes for any errors or omissions.

*Created October 2023 -Revised October 2024*

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# INTRODUCTION

*Greetings to you the people, congregations, and associations of the Maine Conference of the United Church of Christ:*

*We, the members of the Social Action Committee (SAC), present to you the annual update to a Social Action Resource Guide. The SAC was formed in late 2020 for the purpose of creating and supporting efforts that answer the call for ministries of peace, justice, and creation care. This is not ministry that we do alone. Different groups in the Conference, churches, and church members already carry out such vital work. The purpose of the Guide is to keep you informed, and inspire participation, dialogue, and growth in all that we can do for the good of our communities and world, now and for future generations.*

*The prophet Isaiah says “you shall raise up the foundations of many generations; you shall be called the repairer of the breach, the restorer of streets to live in. You shall be like a spring of water, whose waters never fail.” Our hope is to faithfully engage us in building this more just society and sustainable planet.*

*Let justice roll down like waters ...*

*Stephen Hastings - [stephenh11656@gmail.com](mailto:stephenh11656@gmail.com)*

*Chair*

*Social Action Committee (SAC)*

*September 2024*

# SOCIAL ACTION CHARGE

**Name:** Social Action Committee

Approved by the BoD on March 21, 2020

## **Representation:**

- One representative per Association appointed by each Association.
- One at-large representative from the BoD.

## **Responsibilities:**

- **Support, respond to, and encourage** resource teams, associations, churches, and people of the Maine Conference engaging in or interested in engaging in social action.
- **Collect and disseminate** information on social action engaged in by resource teams, associations, churches, people of the Maine Conference, and the United Church of Christ at-large.
- **Provide an available and ongoing way for conference-wide communication** for those resource teams, associations, churches, and people of the Maine Conference engaging in social action. This can include information concerning social action across the United Church of Christ.
- In consultation with resource teams, associations, churches, and people of the Maine Conference, **identify stances on social action that are supported by the Maine Conference. This should include assessments of the current vitality** of prior declarations and resolutions by the Maine Conference.
- **Identify opportunities for and encourage participation** by resource teams, associations, churches, and people of the Maine Conference at social action events reflecting stances on social action that are supported by the Maine Conference.
- **Identify and promote new social action initiatives** in the Conference, including opportunities to offer local support to social action occurring across the United Church of Christ.
- **Act as a resource and clearinghouse** for resource teams, associations, churches, and people of the Maine Conference wishing to present *any* resolution to the Annual Meeting of the Maine Conference. That is to say that resolutions need not be limited to social action subject matter.
- **Report and respond to the Board of Directors.** Represent and report for the Committee at Association meetings.

# VISION –MISSION - STRUCTURE

<b>Vision</b>	Faithfully engaging others toward a more just society and planet.
<b>Mission</b>	The SAC seeks to work with resource teams, associations, churches, and people of the Maine Conference UCC to promote engagement in social action. This includes collecting and disseminating information about relevant social action resolutions, taking action on resolutions, and supporting and encouraging others in their social action work, both in Maine and in the wider UCC.

## Representation:

- One representative per Association appointed by each Association.
- One at-large representative from the BoD.

## Broader Responsibilities:

- Support, respond to, and encourage resource teams, associations, churches, and people of the Maine Conference engaging in or interested in engaging in social action.
- Collect and disseminate information on social action engaged in by resource teams, associations, churches, people of the Maine Conference, and the United Church of Christ at-large.
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- Identify opportunities for and encourage participation by resource teams, associations, churches, and people of the Maine Conference at social action events reflecting stances on social action that are supported by the Maine Conference.
- Identify and promote new social action initiatives in the Conference, including opportunities to offer local support to social action occurring across the United Church of Christ.
- Act as a resource and clearinghouse for resource teams, associations, churches, and people of the Maine Conference wishing to present *any* resolution to the Annual Meeting of the Maine Conference. That is to say that resolutions need not be limited to social action subject matter.
- Report and respond to the Board of Directors. Represent and report for the Committee at Association meetings.

## Methods for Carrying Out Mission:

- Create and manage a Social Action Facebook page for the Maine UCC to disseminate information and provide a venue for others to share about local/other initiatives
- Create a working email list of Maine UCC church leaders to disseminate information directly to churches
- Identify a point person within each individual congregation - someone with a passion for it!
- Meet monthly as a committee to discuss resolutions and areas of focus
- Have a link to our Facebook page and newsletter/update on the Maine Conference webpage
- Collaboration with a member of the Maine Conference staff
- Build collaborations with other agencies to create a network of resources to better address social justice initiatives
- Create a catalog of social justice resources that can be shared with members of the Maine Conference and its partners.

## RECENT INITIATIVES

### WORKSHOPS

- Immigration and “Loving Your Neighbor” (November 30, 2021) – featured Charlie Gauvin of Catholic Charities Refugee Immigration Services
- Organizing for Social Action in the Local Church (January 25, 2022) – featured the Cumberland and Waterford UCC churches
- Climate Change (February 22, 2022) – featured “A Climate to Thrive” and the “Earth Care and Spirituality Resource Team”
- Wabanaki Nations and Tribal Sovereignty in Maine: A Call For the Maine Conference UCC to Support the Sovereignty of Wabanaki Nations (October 4 & 12, 2022) – featured Osihkiyol (Zeke) Crofton-MacDonald; Walastoqey Nation Tribal Ambassador for the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians and Maine Indian Tribal State Commission, Tribal Co-Commissioner.
- A second workshop was led by the Social Action Committee (October 12, 2022). This workshop offered a closer look at the Resolution for Support of Tribal Sovereignty in Maine, and more specifically on the recommendations for improving the 1980 Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act.
- *Gun Violence in Maine: Processing our Grief and Mobilizing our Faithful Response* - Three workshops led by members of the Social Action Committee and Conference Minister Marisa Laviola at three locations -- Waterville UCC/February 7; Hammond St. UCC in Bangor/ February 10; High St. Congregational in Auburn/February 11, 2023.
- We Need Better Laws, for God's Sake: Faith in Advocacy – led by members of the Social Action Committee at the Maine Conference Annual Meeting held at Pilgrim Lodge on October 19, 2024.

### BOOK STUDY

***The Gathering's” Reimagining Indigenous-Settler Relations*** by Shirley Hager and Mawopiyane (June 1; 8; 15; 22, 2021) led by Dianne Morse Leonard, Reverend Doretta Colburn and Al Struck.

## **RESOLUTIONS**

A Resolution of Support for Tribal Sovereignty in Maine was submitted by the Social Action Committee (SAC) and the Anti-Racism Resource Team to the delegates of Maine Conference United Church of Christ at the 91st Annual Meeting of the Maine Conference. The resolution was passed by the delegates to Maine Conference Annual Meeting on October 15, 2022.

## **CALL TO ACTION**

The Social Action Committee (SAC) circulated a Call to Action encouraging the people of Maine to contact the Maine legislature regarding gun safety measures tentatively scheduled for consideration in the spring of 2023 and to sign up with the Maine Gun Safety Coalition's "Sign up Network" (SUN) for updates on the status of gun safety legislation.

## **CONGRESSIONAL TESTIMONY**

Members of the Social Action Committee (SAC) provided testimony on Gun Violence Prevention legislation (LD2086, LD2224, LD2086) on March 5/7, 2024 and LD 2223 on April 9, 2024. See bill tracking: <https://legislature.maine.gov/billtracker/#Paper>.



# **SUMMARY OF MAINE UCC RESOLUTIONS**

## **An Urgent Call For The Prevention Of Gun Violence: Submitted By The Witness Life Commission, 2013**

This resolution calls our nation to urgently enact laws that seek to prevent gun violence. It calls on the churches, pastors, and laity of the Maine Conference to courageously address this issue in prayer and witness. It asks our elected representatives to urgently enact laws that:

- (1) Ban the sale and possession of high-capacity rapid-fire weapons by individuals,
- (2) Ban the sale and possession of large ammunition magazines by individuals,
- (3) Require universal background checks and safety courses for all sales of guns, including sales at gun shows and between private individuals: and

We call on the staff of the Maine Conference to testify to our elected officials about the Convictions of this resolution. The Maine Conference is urged to promote a day of remembrance and witness against violence, where issues of gun violence and our work for peace are discussed openly and opportunities for advocacy offered.

## **A Resolution Declaring The Maine Conference Of The United Church Of Christ To Be An Open And Affirming Conference: Submitted By The Witness Life Commission, 2003**

This resolution seeks to fully welcome people of all expressions of sexual orientation and gender identity as well as other groups who have felt historically under-represented or excluded by religious entities into the life of the Maine Conference of the United Church of Christ. All settings of the Maine Conference (including Associations and Churches) are encouraged to consider a process by which they might discern for themselves whether to declare they are to be Open and Affirming. *Upon acceptance by the United Church of Christ Coalition for LGBT Concerns the Maine Conference of the United Church of Christ will be publicly listed as an Open and Affirming Conference.* The Open and Affirming Statement of the Maine Conference shall be incorporated into the By-Laws of the Maine Conference United Church of Christ.

**A “Just Peace” Resolution, Asking The Maine Conference Of The United Church Of Christ To Call For An End To The US War In Iraq: \* Submitted By The Witness Life Commission, 2007**

The resolution calls for The Maine Conference of the United Church of Christ to declare itself a “Just Peace Conference,” and to enter into dialogue with those of other faiths to acknowledge our shared grief over the human suffering and physical damage of this war and to stand with them in their own witness for peace. The Maine Conference of the United Church of Christ disagrees with the war in Iraq and calls for an immediate bi-partisan dialogue within Congress to craft legislation which will call for political dialogue and negotiations amongst all nations within the region and an official pronouncement by the leadership of congress for an international/ inter-religious dialogue partnering toward a goal of peace with justice in our world. Then approved resolution will be sent to Maine’s Representatives in Congress and its Senators.

*\*This resolution needs to be examined again by the Social Action Committee as we look at our stance on “Just Peace” in light of current conflicts in which the United States has involvement*

**Resolution To Abide By And Promote The Maine Council Of Churches’ Covenant For Civil Discourse Submitted By The Witness Life Commission, 2010**

This resolution seeks to address the deeply disturbing examples of talk which tears down and is spoken to antagonize and inflame, and false witness which has undermined the foundations of our community. The conference calls on members of the churches and associations of the Maine Conference to rededicate itself to civility and public discourse and to sign the covenant of the Maine Council of Churches in agreement to:

1. Act respectfully to others, including those with opposing views in public debate.
2. Refrain from personal attacks while maintaining the right to vigorously disagree.
3. Refrain from personal attacks which characterize opponents as evil.
4. To refuse to make untrue statements in defense of a position.
5. To value honesty, truth and civility while striving to find workable solutions.
6. To expect that any person, party, campaign or corporation working on my/our behalf or to whom we’ve contributed time or money in support, shall follow these same covenant statements.

**Resolution On Caring For The Ecology And Life On Earth As A Sacred Responsibility On Holy Ground In A Sacramental Universe Submitted By Commission On Witness Life, 2012**

A resolution calling for the ongoing commitment to Earthcare as a spiritual value and an active expression of ecological and social justice. The resolution instructs the Witness Life Commission, in consultation with the Coordination Council to develop a Committee on Earthcare and Spirituality for the purpose of collating, developing and disseminating programs and resources supportive of this view of God's creation.

**Resolution To Address Climate Change Through Investments In Renewable And Clean Energy Sources, Energy Conversation, And Energy Efficiency In Order To Reduce Dependence On Fossil Fuels: Submitted By The Mission Council, 2015**

The resolution calls for the active use of Maine Conference energy investments to promote the development and use of sustainable clean energy sources and to improve energy conservation and efficiency, contributing to the reduction and eventual elimination of dependence on fossil fuels. It also calls for the Earthcare Resource Team to create Conference-wide programs that promote reduction of our collective carbon footprint. Steps to further this resolution's goals include:

1. Review the Conference's investments in energy and move them out of fossil fuels into sustainable sources of energy.
2. Communicate between all parts of the Maine Conference (local churches up to the state level) about ways to reinvest (or invest) in sustainable sources of energy in an economically viable way.
3. To educate all tiers of the Maine Conference about practical ways to reduce carbon footprints.
4. Implement an educational program on global warming and climate change.
5. Provide spiritual resources and worship opportunities that lift up Earth and Creation as "Holy Ground."

**A Resolution Of Support For Tribal Sovereignty In Maine: Submitted By The Social Action Committee, 2022**

The injustice, abuse and suffering imposed upon the tribes of native peoples in what are now the United States and Canada are well known, well documented, and not excusable in any way, either now or in the time of European conquest and colonization. The Maine Conference United Church of Christ stands in favor of:

reparation for past harms; restoration of sovereign tribal lands, life and culture; and always supporting the expressed will of the tribes on matters of tribal sovereignty. The Social Action Committee and the Anti-Racism Resource Team will facilitate actions including legislative advocacy, as supported by the Wabanaki and offering education both for and from members, congregations, and associations of the Maine Conference.

***NOTE: The Social Action Committee of the Maine Conference of the United Church of Christ reviewed all resolutions passed by the Conference and found the seven summarized above to still be viable.***

***Currently, not all of these have been fully implemented. The Social Action Committee is aware of this and in the beginning stages of developing an action plan to support thorough and ongoing implementation.***

# APPENDIX A: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The Social Action Committee (SAC) of the Maine Conference UCC recognizes that the resources listed in Appendix A are not all encompassing. It is our hope and prayer that these resources will provide a starting point for those seeking information on these topics and more. Please contact members of the Social Action Committee if you have updated information for any of the organizations or the individuals listed. If you know of other resources that might be helpful. Please contact members of the Social Action Committee (SAC).

*You may need to paste links in your browser to activate.*

## CLIMATE CHANGE

- MCUCC Earth Care & Spirituality Resource Team – Rev. Stephen Hastings/Chairperson - [stephenh11656@gmail.com](mailto:stephenh11656@gmail.com)
- Cumberland Congregational Church UCC - <https://www.cumberlanducc.org/> - Has a Green Team devoted to creating a community that helps protect our earth and our health by raising environmental awareness, by taking and encouraging local action, and by engaging in global thinking.
- Waterford Congregational Church UCC - <https://www.wccucc.com/> - *Climate Conversations; What Can We Do?*
- Climate to Thrive - <https://www.aclimatetothrive.org/> - Climate to Thrive works to transition Mount Desert Island off fossil fuels, rapidly reducing greenhouse gas emissions through a combination of locally sited and owned clean energy generation, energy efficiency, and electrification.
- The BTS Center: Spiritual Leadership for a Climate Changed World – Provides programs for ordained and non-ordained, clergy and laypersons, leaders of traditional religious communities and other communities of practice — with the knowledge, skills, mindsets, and practices for effective and faithful ministry in this a changing religious landscape and a global climate crisis. 207.774.5212 | [info@thebtscenter.org](mailto:info@thebtscenter.org) | [www.thebtscenter.org](http://www.thebtscenter.org)

## GUN SAFETY

**Active Bystander / De-escalation Training** - Prevention Action Change: offers training for Individuals to build skills to help end violence. Website: [www.PACMaine.com](http://www.PACMaine.com); Phone: 207-232-0484; P.O. Box 10843, Portland, Maine 04102.

**Brady: United Against Gun Violence** - <http://www.bradyunited.org/> (a gun safety lobby); 840 First Street, NE; Suite 400; Washington, DC 20002 or [brady@bradyunited.org](mailto:brady@bradyunited.org).

**Coalition to Stop Gun Violence** -- The Coalition to Stop Gun Violence (CSGV) seeks to secure freedom from gun violence through research, strategic engagement and effective policy advocacy. CSGV is comprised of 47 national organizations working to reduce gun violence. Its coalition

members include religious organizations, child welfare advocates, public health professionals, and social justice organizations.

**Doctors 4 GUN SAFETY** - <https://doctors4gunsafety.org/> -- Doctors 4 Gun Safety is committed group of physicians who advocate that gun violence represents a public health crisis in the United States. As physicians we serve as advocates for the nation's health. Our goal is to use education, research and advocacy as methods to achieve safe and responsible gun ownership and use and to be a part of the dialogue centered on protecting ourselves, our children, our patients and our fellow citizens.

**Everytown for Gun Safety** -- An umbrella organization coordinating the activities of Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America and Mayors against Illegal Guns.

**Falmouth Congregational Church UCC** – <https://www.falmouthcongregationalchurch.org/> - A subgroup of members who are actively engaged in gun safety advocacy. Rev. Amelia Edson – Contact the [pastoramelia@falmouthcongregationalchurch.org](mailto:pastoramelia@falmouthcongregationalchurch.org)) and/ or Peggy McGehee at [pmcgehee4@gmail.com](mailto:pmcgehee4@gmail.com)

**First Church in Belfast's Working Group on Gun Legislation** – A working group engaged in gun safety advocacy. Contact Judy William, [bythesea584@gmail.com](mailto:bythesea584@gmail.com)

**First Congregational Church Blue Hill UCC** - Blue Hill Gun Violence Working Group with a focus on the study of gun violence as a “wicked problem” as defined by design theorists Horst Rittel and Melvin Webber - <https://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/wicked-problem/about/What-is-a-wicked-problem>. Contact Ann Boudreaux, [ann.e.boudreaux@gmail.com](mailto:ann.e.boudreaux@gmail.com) or Rev. Lisa Durkee, [lisa.j.durkee@gmail.com](mailto:lisa.j.durkee@gmail.com).

**Congregational Church in Cumberland, UCC** -- [www.cumberlanducc.org](http://www.cumberlanducc.org) – is willing to be a resource for those churches looking to install solar panels. Contact: Rev. Allison Smith at [allisoncgsmith@gmail.com](mailto:allisoncgsmith@gmail.com)

**Gun Free Kids** -- GunFreeKids.org (GFK) is an Internet-based 501 (c) 4 issue advocacy organization, which provides tools for people to take action on pending state and national legislation and assists voters nationwide in learning about and supporting state-based candidates who favor gun violence prevention policies.

**Guns to Gardens National Buyback Cooperative**- <https://www.gunstogardens.org/> - Engages gun violence prevention by adapting the buyback model to use disabled gun parts for community healing and further engagement through the making of garden tools, art, jewelry, and other items that help us imagine and act into life giving neighborhoods.

**Maine Gun Safety Coalition** – hosts a weekly zoom meeting on Monday of each week at 4:00 p.m. on gun safety advocacy. They provide updates on pending legislation and gun safety initiatives. Zoom Link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81645395963?pwd=fLeZYzaHZBtVafhUklwinwzTmcU1KT.1>

**Mayors Against Illegal Guns** -- Mayors Against Illegal Guns is a coalition of over 1000 current and former mayors across the country who have joined together to prevent criminals from possessing guns illegally.

**Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America** -- Important grassroots activist organization formed by stay-at-home mom Shannon Watts following the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in December 2012.

**Shippensburg University** - <https://library.ship.edu/c.php?g=21651&p=126895>

This guide will serve as a starting point for Shippensburg University students wishing to conduct research on various aspects of the national debate over gun control. You will find news sources to keep you up-to-date on recent firearms issues; information on past and present gun control legislation; websites of advocacy groups; and books, articles, and reports concerning gun control.

**Third Way** --Third Way is a think tank that seeks to advance public policy. Their agenda includes tighter gun safety laws.

## HOMELESSNESS

### Central Maine

**Bridging the Gap** is a program that helps house and unhoused folks in the Augusta area  
<https://www.btgaugusta.org/>

**Bread of Life** has a soup kitchen, emergency shelter, and transitional housing in Augusta: <https://mainebreadoflife.org/>

**Capital Area New Mainers Project** - <https://www.newmainersproject.org/> is not a project explicitly for unhoused people but it does work with new immigrants and asylum-seekers to help connect them to resources in the area.

**Sue Mackey Andrews** - [Smandrews@gmail.com](mailto:Smandrews@gmail.com) is a contact person for information about homelessness in the Dover- Foxcroft area.

**Starfish Village in Waterville** - <https://www.watervilleucc.org/starfish-village> - Starfish Village is a ministry of the Waterville United Church of Christ that is a comprehensive program for homeless families that provides immediate and long-term practical help, advocacy and mentoring – all structured to meet the specific needs of individual homeless families to help them successfully and more quickly transition into permanent stability. After the one-year period, Starfish Village will continue to mentor the family as needed.

**Orono Housing Association** - <https://www.orono.org/363/Housing-in-Orono> -

Offers a variety of housing opportunities. Housing ranges from ownership for households with a range of incomes to rentals for students, seniors, and working families.

### Downeast Maine

**H.O.M.E., Inc.** (Orland, ME) - <https://homemmausa.org/> - H.O.M.E.'s Homeless services include: Diversion, which aims to prevent homelessness prior to entering shelter, Emergency overnight shelter across four locations, and Housing Navigation which exists to assist shelter guests with finding permanent, stable housing.



**Families First** – <https://familiesfirstellsworth.org/> - A Family Center with residential and outreach programs serving families with children in Hancock County, Maine.

## Midcoast Maine

**Knox County Homeless Coalition** <https://www.homehelphope.org/> - Meets basic needs, provide shelter solutions, connect to resources, and offer highly relational, trauma-informed support through programs such as The Landing Place <https://www.homehelphope.org/the-landing-placehttps://www.homehelphope.org/news/category/The+Landing+Place>

**H.O.M.E., Inc.** (Orland,ME) - <https://homemmausa.org/> - H.O.M.E.'s Homeless services include: Diversion, which aims to prevent homelessness prior to entering shelter, Emergency overnight shelter across four locations, and Housing Navigation which exists to assist shelter guests with finding permanent, stable housing.

## Northern Maine

**Homeless Services of Aroostook** - Administration: PO Box 1753 | Midway Drive; Presque Isle, Maine 04769; 207-762-6000.

- **Sister Mary O'Donnell**  
Emergency Homeless Shelter
- **Aroostook Bridge**

745 Central Drive; Presque Isle, Maine 04769; Phone: 207-764 -4125.

## Southern Maine

**State Street Church** - <https://statestreetchurch.org/> - Has used funds from the state to rehab their church basement to create a Winter Family Shelter. They utilized a coalition of local faith communities sending volunteers each evening and overnight and are working with the City of Portland as an extension of their family shelter. Bryan Breault - [pastorbryanssc@gmail.com](mailto:pastorbryanssc@gmail.com) is pastor at the State Street Church.

**Preble Street** - <https://www.preblestreet.org/category/street-outreach-collaborative/> - Addresses Portland's unsheltered homeless population.

**York County Community Action Committee** - Rachel Phipps: [Rachel.Phipps@yccac.org](mailto:Rachel.Phipps@yccac.org), Meaghan Arzberger: [meaghan.arzberger@yccac.org](mailto:meaghan.arzberger@yccac.org) and Jennifer Davie: [Jennifer.M.Davie@yccac.org](mailto:Jennifer.M.Davie@yccac.org).

**York County Shelter; Alfred, Maine** - <https://www.yorkcountyshelterprograms.com/> - Helps people address problems that led to being homeless. Offers therapeutic services, connects people to community resources, provides job training, and helps people transition into permanent housing.

**Williston-Immanuel United Church (WIUC)** - <https://www.wiuc.org/> in Portland is currently housing 33 asylum seekers. **Family Promise** <https://www.gpfamilypromise.org/> is doing the management of our guests. **Avesta Housing** <https://www.avestahousing.org/> will be converting half of Williston-Immanuel United Church building (if all goes as planned) into affordable housing. Rev. Reba Delzell - [reba@wiuc.org](mailto:reba@wiuc.org) is the pastor at Williston-Immanuel.



## Western Maine

**McKenny-Vento: Serving Students in Transition** - The Maine Department of Education and Maine schools follow the provisions of the federal **McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act**, which aims to minimize the educational disruptions experienced by homeless students. Amanda Clark at 207-778-3031.

**Monique Poulin** - [mpoulin@mtbluersd.org](mailto:mpoulin@mtbluersd.org) is a key contact for on for marshaling resources of many kinds for children and families impacted by homelessness in the area.

**Sanford Police Department** has a Mental Health Unit (works with homeless population) - aboard this team are Shannon Bentley (LCSW): [srbentley@sanfordmaine.org](mailto:srbentley@sanfordmaine.org) and Lacey Bailey (OPTIONS clinician) [lbbailey@sanfordmaine.org](mailto:lbbailey@sanfordmaine.org).

**Acton Congregational Church UCC** works with the Congolese and Angolan folks in the Sanford area. They provide clothes, kitchen items, bikes and furniture. Private families have taken in many of the folks and apartments have been found for others. Melissa Marquis - [mmarquis@actoncongregationalchurch.org](mailto:mmarquis@actoncongregationalchurch.org) is the pastor at the Acton church.

**Oxford County WELLNESS Collaborative** - <https://www.ocwcmaine.org/> - Brendan Schauffler 207-744-6191.

**HUB 5** - Is one of 9 Service Hubs across the state created by the Maine Housing Authority in partnership with cities and counties across Maine to implement a state-wide strategy to address homelessness. Kobi Perry, Director Family & Health Services at Western Maine Community Action 207-860-4492 or email [info@wmca.org](mailto:info@wmca.org).

**Rumford Group Homes** - <https://www.rumfordgrouphomes.org/> - A community-based non-profit social service agency. We serve abused, neglected, and homeless youth and their families from throughout the state of Maine with an emphasis on the tri-county region

**Oxford, Androscoggin, and Franklin Counties**. Key contacts for Oxford County are Melissa McEntee [mmcantee@rumfordgrouphomes.org](mailto:mmcantee@rumfordgrouphomes.org)

**Stephen's Memorial Hospital/Healthy Oxford Hills** (Carl Costanzi) - 81 Main Street Norway, Maine 04268 Phone: **207-743-5933**

**Pamela Williams** - [pamwilliams01@yahoo.com](mailto:pamwilliams01@yahoo.com) - Is a contact for information about programs for homeless population in the Oxford Hills and Western Maine area. She is affiliated with the **Second Congregational Church of Norway UCC** - 207-743- 5925.

## Statewide Programs

**Neighbors Need Me** - <https://www.neighbors-need-me.com/takeaction> - A faith-based movement for hope, housing equity, and home.

**New Beginnings** - <https://newbeginmaine.org/> - Provides a **24-hour emergency shelter**, **supportive housing**, and **outreach** team help youth from throughout Maine find safety off the streets.

**Maine State Housing Authority** - <https://www.mainehousing.org/programs-services/homeless> - Finances emergency shelters and other affordable housing options.

<https://www.mainehousing.org/programs-services/homeless/emergency-shelters> - A list of shelters by county.

## IMMIGRATION

- Charlie Gauvin of Catholic Charities Refugee Immigration Services  
<https://www.ccmaine.org/refugee-immigration-services>
- First Parish UCC – (Gorham, Maine) <https://www.firstparishgorham.org/> or Rev. Christine Dyke [christine@firstparishgorham.org](mailto:christine@firstparishgorham.org)
- Maine Immigrants' Rights Coalition - <https://maineimmigrantrights.org/> - Their mission is to improve legal, social, and economic conditions for immigrants in the state of Maine.
- Greater Portland Family Promise - <https://www.gpfamilypromise.org/> - Their mission is to help families experiencing homelessness and low-income families achieve sustainable independence through a community-based response.
- Neighbors Need Me - <https://www.neighbors-need-me.com/takeaction> - A faith-based movement for hope, housing equity, and home.
- Congregational Church in Cumberland UCC - Welcoming Neighbors Team works on advocacy and welcoming new neighbors including a multilingual worship service and Legal fund. Created 3 part recorded program "From Africa to Maine: Why and How People Seek Asylum in Maine" (with Prince Memorial Library) <https://www.cumberlanducc.org/from-africa-to-maine-how-can-you-help-1>  
Contact Gail Witherill [gwitherrill@gmail.com](mailto:gwitherrill@gmail.com) or Rev. Allison Smith [allisoncgsmith@gmail.com](mailto:allisoncgsmith@gmail.com).
- Maine Conservation Voters - <https://www.maineconservation.org/> - Informs voters on legislation on such issues as: equity and social justice; climate change, land, water, and wildlife, elections, democracy and partnerships.
- Maine Council of Churches - <https://mainecouncilofchurches.org/> or 207-772-1918 - Offering resources and programs on faith-based advocacy for social, economic, and environmental justice, with a focus on public policy and to be the public square and a prophetic voice of faith for justice, equity, inclusion, compassion, and peace.

## LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY

**Maine Council of Churches** - Provides resources and programs and faith based advocacy for social, economic and environmental justice with a focus on public policy,  
<https://mainecouncilofchurches.org/> ; 202 Woodford Street, Portland, ME 04103; 207-772-1918, email: [info@mainecouncilofchurches.org](mailto:info@mainecouncilofchurches.org)

## LGBTQ+

**Reconciling Works: Lutheran's for Full Participation** –  
<https://www.reconcilingworks.org/resources/sogie/> - Advocates for the acceptance, full participation, and liberation of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and gender expressions within the Lutheran Church.

**St. Hugh of Lincoln Episcopal Church - *What does the Bible say about homosexuality?***  
<https://www.sthugh.net/lgbtq-affirming-scripture> - A collection of scripture compiled by those

whose LGBTQ family members have experienced hurt and rejection because of who they were – highlighted are many messages of love and inclusion in the Bible to help people consider the original meaning of the passages used to condemn LGBTQ people.

**Transmission Ministry Collective** – <https://transmissionministry.com/resources/> - An excellent collection of resources dedicated to the spiritual care, faith formation and leadership potential of transgender and gender-expansive Christians.

**Out Maine** - <https://www.outmaine.org/> - Creates and supports LGBTQ+ youth and their families and allies with specialized programs

**ONA Coalition** - <https://openandaffirming.org/resources/issues/> - The Open and Affirming Coalition of the United Church of Christ advocates for the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community and their families through inclusion and justice in the UCC, and beyond.

**Intermed** - <https://www.intermed.com/> - Is in Southern Maine and they provide gender affirming care.

**Pilgrim Lodge - Maine Conference United Church of Christ** - <https://www.pilgrimlodge.org/> - Pilgrim Lodge is an Open and Affirming camp with inclusive practices for all gender identities. Camp Pride, a week-long program for LGBTQ+ youth and allies, and Pride Across the Ages, for individuals and families, are sessions that focus on creating an affirming space for conversations around spirituality, identity, and love for self and others. Pilgrim Lodge Director: Elizabeth Charles McGough - [echarles@pilgrimlodge.org](mailto:echarles@pilgrimlodge.org)

**Maine Trans.Net** - Is a community based organization led by transgender people for transgender people that provides peer-to-peer support groups, social and community events, and advocacy for the transgender community across Maine, and transgender cultural competency training for medical, mental health, and social service providers. <https://www.mainetrans.net/>

## **Liturgy**

**Enfleshed: Spiritual Nourishment for Collective Liberation** - [tps://enfleshed.com/](https://enfleshed.com/) - Prioritizes spiritual nourishment by and for those in communities that are undervalued, under-resourced, or under-appreciated through creative theologies (art, poetry, music and experience as theological sources) and ensures anti-racist values/theologies in all programming and content.

## **Books**

*A Brief Guide to Ministry with LGBTQ Youth* by Cody Sanders  
*Transforming* by Austen Hartke

## MENTAL HEALTH

**United Church of Christ Disabilities Ministries - [All Are Welcome!](#) - [United Church of Christ Disabilities Ministries \(uccdm.org\)](#)** – Provides a variety of resources to assist faith communities with the tools needed to become accessible to all.

### Maine Mental Health Phone Resources:

- 211 - Statewide services and help available 24/7
- 1-866-771-9276 – Intentional Warm Line – Statewide peer support specialist for mental health recovery
- 988 – Statewide Crisis Line – Psychiatric intervention and assistance with a Mental Health Crisis
- 911 – Emergency Services – Call or go to your nearest Emergency Room for immediate care in a safe environment

**National Maternal Mental Health Hotline (*HRSA – Health Resources & Services Administration*)** – For a new parent – or about to be who is feeling sad, worried, overwhelmed, or concerned about being good enough to parent. For emotional support or resources:

- Call – 1-833-852-6262
- Text 1-833-TLC-MAMA

## TRIBAL SOVEREIGNTY

- MCUCC Anti-Racism Resource Team – Rev. Crissy Cataldo - [pastorchrissywcc@gmail.com](mailto:pastorchrissywcc@gmail.com) & Rev. Allison Smith - [allisoncgsmith@gmail.com](mailto:allisoncgsmith@gmail.com)
- **Wabanaki Alliance** - <https://wabanakialliance.com/> - The Wabanaki Alliance was formed to educate people of Maine about the need for securing sovereignty of the tribes in Maine.
- **Wabanaki Reach** - <https://www.wabanakireach.org/> - Supports the self-determination of Wabanaki people through education, truth-telling, restorative justice, and restorative practices in Wabanaki and Maine communities.
- **Maine Indian Tribal State Commission:** <https://www.mitsc.org/contact>  
<https://www.mitsc.org/about#members-and-staff>.
- Osihkiyol (Zeke) Crofton-MacDonald - [zcroftonmacdonald@gmail.com](mailto:zcroftonmacdonald@gmail.com) - Walastogey Nation Tribal Ambassador for the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians and Maine Indian Tribal State Commission, Tribal Co-Commissioner.
- Rev. Doretta Colburn - [colburndoretta@gmail.com](mailto:colburndoretta@gmail.com) – Workshop leader for *The Gathering's" Reimagining Indigenous-Settler Relations*
- Dianne Morse-Leonard - [dmorseleonard@gmail.com](mailto:dmorseleonard@gmail.com) - Workshop leader for *The Gathering's" Reimagining Indigenous-Settler Relations*

# **APPENDIX B: TEMPLATES**

## **RESOLUTION PROCEDURE FOR PRESENTATION AT MAINE CONFERENCE UCC ANNUAL MEETINGS**

### **A. PROCEDURE**

All proposed resolutions for the Maine Conference UCC Annual Meeting must be received in the Conference office no later than 75 days prior to the Annual Meeting. Proposed resolutions will be reviewed and approved by the Coordinating Council prior to being distributed to the delegates in advance of the Annual Meeting.

### **B. SUBMISSION OF RESOLUTIONS**

Resolutions may be prepared and submitted by the following individuals or organizations:

- (1) Any local church of the Maine Conference of the United Church of Christ, provided the resolution has been approved for submission by the congregation or by the official governing body of that church. The date voted, number supporting, opposing and abstaining should be reported when the resolution is submitted.
- (2) Any Association of the Maine Conference of the United Church of Christ, provided the resolution has been approved by submission at a duly called meeting of the Association or its Executive Committee.
- (3) Any structure created by the Conference By-Laws, or by an annual meeting or a special meeting of the Conference.
- (4) The Coordinating Council of the Maine Conference United Church of Christ.

### **C. FORMAT**

Resolutions and Other Formal Motions shall include the following information:

- (1) A brief title which must accurately reflect the intent of the proposed motion. The names of the church or body presenting the Resolution shall be included.

- (2) A brief summary that accurately reflects the content of the Resolution
- (3) The biblical, theological and ethical rationale; and the expected outcome.
- (4) The text of the motion.
- (5) A statement that the implementing body is responsible for developing the strategy and program designed to implement the Resolution.
- (6) All resolutions must be submitted to the Conference office via e-mail, in WORD format. Resolutions should be double-spaced, and each line should be numbered.

#### **D. RESPONSIBILITIES**

- (1) Two representatives, from the group submitting the resolution, must lead the Hearing on the resolution on Friday afternoon before the Meeting.
- (2) Members of the Group submitting the resolution must be present when the resolution is presented, discussed and voted on at Annual Meeting.
- (3) The group submitting the Resolution must complete the Resolution Information Form and submit this form with the Resolution for consideration by the Board of Directors.

## E. RESOLUTION TEMPLATE

### .MAINE CONFERENCE UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

#### RESOLUTION INFORMATION FORM

#### TO ACCOMPANY

#### RESOLUTIONS FOR ACTION IN (YEAR)

*A proposed resolution must be accompanied by this Information Form*

*In order for the resolution to be considered. Please be succinct.*

NAME OF CHURCH BODY SUBMITTING: \_\_\_\_\_

VOTE: \_\_\_\_\_ SUPPORTING \_\_\_\_\_ OPPOSING \_\_\_\_\_ ABSTAINING

TYPE OF RESOLUTION: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Title of resolution: \_\_\_\_\_
2. State the purpose of this resolution and expected results.
3. What would the Maine Conference UCC be expected to do as a result of this resolution's adoption?
4. Who would implement or follow-up the resolutions on behalf of the Maine Conference UCC?
5. What would be the costs of implementing this resolution? What is the proposed source of the funds?  
  
Please be as specific as possible.
6. What kind of report back is expected? When? By whom? To whom?
7. Who will be the presenter of the resolution at the Annual Meeting of the Maine Conference UCC  
  
with the authority to accept or reject any changes in the resolution proposed at the Annual Meeting?

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

## F. SAMPLE GUN LEGISLATION SURVEY – *Courtesy of First Church of Belfast*

### Do you own a gun?

- Yes: 9 24.32%
- No: 28. 75.68%
- No response

### 1. What is your age group?

- Under 18 years: 1 2.70%
- Over 18 years: 36 97.3%

### 2. I feel safe from gun violence.

- Completely safe: 1 2.70%
- Somewhat safe: 16 43.24%
- No opinion: 0 0%
- Somewhat unsafe: 17 48.65%
- Completely unsafe: 2 5.41%

### 3. I feel that children are safe from gun violence in their schools.

- Strongly agree: 1 - 2.70%
- Somewhat agree: 4 - 10.81%
- No opinion: 1 - 2.70%
- Somewhat disagree: 11 - 32.43%
- Strongly disagree: 19 - 51.35%

### 4. To curb gun violence, we need stricter gun legislation.

- Strongly agree : 30 - 81.08%
- Somewhat agree: 3 - 8.11%
- No opinion: 1 - 2.70%
- Somewhat disagree: 2 - 5.41%
- Strongly disagree: 1 - 2.70%

### 5. To curb gun violence, we need increased mental health resources.

- Strongly agree: 27 - 72.97%
- Somewhat agree: 8 - 21.62%
- No opinion: 1 - 2.70%
- Somewhat disagree: 0 - 0%
- Strongly disagree: 1 - 2.70%

### 6. The First Church should work as a congregation to effect a change in Maine's gun laws, as long as that work does not compromise our tax-exempt, 501c3 status.

- Strongly agree: 24 - 64.86%
- Somewhat agree: 9 - 24.32%
- No opinion: 1 - 2.70%
- Somewhat disagree: 1 - 2.70%
- Strongly disagree: 2 - 5.41%



# APPENDIX C: LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY

## CALL TO ACTION - EXAMPLE

### A CALL TO ACTION TO MAINE'S FAITH COMMUNITIES

#### SEEKING GUN SAFETY LAWS IN MAINE

ALL OF US want the people of Maine, young and old, to be safe from gun violence. Yet, there is a relentless increase in gun suicides, homicides and injuries in Maine. This is not the world we want for ourselves, our veterans, our children, or our grandchildren.

Today in Maine, anyone can buy any gun, including semi-automatic weapons and large capacity magazines, in a private sale, without a permit, without safe gun use training, without a background check.

Maine is a source state for criminals who come here to buy guns that they can't buy in their own states that have universal background checks. The shooter last year in Canada who killed 22 people bought his guns in Maine

As people of faith we affirm that life is sacred. We are called to love and protect one another- to tend to the weak and the needy and deliver them from the hand of the wicked; and to be peacemakers (Leviticus 19:18; Psalm 82:4; Matthew 5:9).

**We are encouraged and hopeful that the Maine legislature will be considering gun safety measures in the spring of 2023. These measures can give us a start toward gun safety.**

As people of faith we call for the Maine legislature to pass these three common sense gun safety laws:

1. Require permits to buy or carry a gun, permits would include mental health and criminal background checks, and responsible gun use training; (**L.D. 168**)
2. A 72 hour waiting period before a gun is delivered from a seller to a buyer; (**L.D. 60**)
3. A "red-flag" law so family or friends of a person threatening gun violence to themselves or others can get a gun-confiscation court order (**no L.D. yet assigned**).

States that have enacted these laws have made their citizens safer. These laws do not violate the 2d Amendment: only "law abiding and responsible" persons have a right to bear arms (Supreme Court 2022). Non-law abiding and irresponsible persons do not, and these laws will help keep guns out of their hands and prevent them from doing harm.

As people of faith we ask and pray that you will vote to enact these measures and keep our neighbors, ourselves, and our families safe.

We need to have our voices and presence in the halls and rooms of the Maine Legislature at times when either the legislative committees or the full House and Senate consider and vote on the pending gun safety bills. Opponents of Gun safety show up in numbers at votes and often intimidate lawmakers. You can testify in writing, or by zoom, or in person, or just show up in support, and you can contact your own legislator.

If you are able to show up on a critical vote day please let us know: we need to build a robust network of gun safety supporter through-out Maine.

And please sign up on-line with the Maine Gun Safety Coalition's "Sign up Network" (SUN). See: <https://www.mainegunsafety.org/show-up-network>. Anyone who signs up with SUN will get an "alert" from it about what legislative bills are coming up for hearing, and will receive a background memorandum with information and points in support of the bill. Knowing when to show up--and then showing personally in the Statehouse in Augusta--is critical to help persuade legislators to listen to those who feel unsafe having no gun regulation, and move them to support common sense Gun safety laws.

## **\*\*WHAT ARE THE LIMITS TO LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY?**

- ☐ "IRS rules indicate your non-profit status is only in jeopardy if you devote more than 20% of your paid staff time to lobbying."
- ☐ "It is recommended by the Maine Council of Churches that one steers CLEAR of partisan politics."
- ☐ "Don't endorse or oppose candidates or political parties."

*Caveat: One can do so if speaking personally, but not as a representative of a church, conference or association unless it has been approved by that body.*

- ☐ "You can comment on, advocate for, or oppose legislation, even though bills are (obviously) sponsored by people from one party or another."
- ☐ "Your testimony and commentary should focus on the merits (or flaws) of a bill, regardless of who sponsored it, and should always be framed in faith-based language and logic."

## **SUBMITTING TESTIMONY AS AN INDIVIDUAL AND/OR CHURCH**

Follow this sequence of websites:

1. Register to Testify Electronically (Zoom) and/or Submit Testimony:  
<https://www.maine.gov>
2. Legislative: <https://legislature.maine.gov/>
3. Testimony submission: <https://www.mainelegilature.org/testimony/>
4. If testifying In Person at a Legislative Hearing:  
<https://legislature.maine.gov/house/house/Documents/Testifying>

## TIPS TO SUBMITTING WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLINE

*If you cannot be present at a public hearing you can SUBMIT online Testimony.*

### Steps to Submitting Written Testimony Online:

- ☐ Click this link: <https://www.mainelegislature.org/testimony/>
- ☐ Select Public Hearing
- ☐ Select Public Hearing
- ☐ Select Judiciary from the drop down committee list
- ☐ Select hearing date
- ☐ Type your testimony into the form or upload your testimony
- ☐ Your testimony does not need to be lengthy or profound.
- ☐ Just state that you are in support of LD Number and urge the committee to vote "Ought to Pass." You can also write more, if you wish.

### . Things you need to know when submitting testimony:

- You may sign up to testify electronically (Zoom) or submit written testimony as soon as the bill is scheduled for public hearing;
- To testify electronically (Zoom), register AT LEAST 30 MINUTES before the posted start time of the meeting; registrations after that time will be accepted at the discretion of the committee chairs;
- Testimony received after the day of the public hearing will be distributed to committee members and staff, but it will not be published online;
- Testimony will be publicly available online as soon as possible after the day of the hearing;
- Your name and the organization you represent or the town in which you live, as specified by you on this form, will accompany the publishing of your testimony;
- Include your name and organization or town of residence on any documents;
- If you are having problems with this page, please [click here](#) to email the webmaster.

## TESTIMONY EXAMPLES



### **Testimony to the Judiciary Committee’s Public Hearing on: LD2224, An Act to Strengthen Public Safety by Improving Maine’s Firearm Laws and Mental Health System; and LD2238, An Act to Address Gun Violence in Maine by Requiring a Waiting Period for Certain Firearm Purchases**

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and Members of the Committee: Senator Margaret Rotundo, D – Androscoggin; Representative Kristen Sarah Cloutier, D – Lewiston; President Troy D. Jackson, D – Aroostook; Senator Matthea Daughtry, D – Cumberland; Senator Eloise A. Vitelli, D – Sagadahoc; Representative Maureen Fitzgerald Terry, D – Gorham; Speaker Rachel Talbot Ross, D - Portland

March 7, 2024

My name is the Rev. Ian Lynch, a resident of Waterville. I am offering testimony on behalf of the Maine Conference of the United Church of Christ (UCC) and as a member of its Social Action Committee to **in support of LD 2224 and LD 2238.**

Other members of our committee have also submitted testimony, which I wholeheartedly support. I would like to add a reflection from our experience responding to the Lewiston shooting. As a religious organization concerned for the spiritual and emotional wellbeing not just of our members but of the wider communities where we are present, we felt that it was vital to gather in order to nurture healing. In February we held three “sacred conversations” to address the trauma of gun violence that we had collectively experienced. Each was well attended, with participants engaging in important, heartfelt dialogue.

We were prepared to address sorrow and pain. While that was present, the sessions were filled with desire for change. Numerous attendees actually expressed disappointment that there was no ready plan for action. This feels typical in my experience of most people of faith. We have long understood that thoughts and prayers, as important as they are, are insufficient to prevent the next tragedy. Our scripture teaches that faith without works is dead. That is why we are here now calling on you to enact sensible legislation that would see our faith put into action.

Submitted by,  
Ian Lynch  
Maine Conference United Church of Christ  
Social Action Committee Member  
Waterville Resident  
Pastor of First Congregational Church UCC, Waterville



**Written Testimony for the Judiciary Committee's Public Hearing on LD 2224, An Act to Strengthen Public Safety by Improving Maine's Firearm Laws and Mental Health System**

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and Members of the Committee: Senator Margaret Rotundo, D –

Androscoggin; Representative Kristen Sarah Cloutier, D – Lewiston; President Troy D. Jackson, D – Aroostook; Senator Matthea Daughtry, D – Cumberland; Senator Eloise A. Vitelli, D – Sagadahoc; Representative Maureen Fitzgerald Terry, D – Gorham; Speaker Rachel Talbot Ross, D - Portland

March 7, 2024.

*My name is Dianne Morse-Leonard from Waterford, ME. I am writing on behalf of the Maine Conference of the United Church of Christ's Social Action Committee, to testify in support of LD 2224.*

*Following the horrific shootings in Lewiston on October 25, 2023, the UCC's Social Action Committee held three gatherings to help those attending process their grief and start a conversation about ways to move forward to prevent further gun violence in our state. For several years the Maine UCC has had a resolution to support laws that: ban the sales and possession of high capacity rapid-fire weapons by individuals; ban the sale and possession of large ammunition magazines by individuals; and require universal background checks and safety courses for all sales of guns, including sales at gun shows and between private individuals. LD 2224 would address the issue of background checks in private sales as well as "extreme risk protection" which is critical for saving lives when someone is in a moment of crisis, demonstrated by observable and varying signs of behavior.*

*Our daughter and her partner live in Lisbon Falls within a mile and a half (and about three quarters of a mile through the woods) from the boat landing where Robert Card's car was found and even closer to the recycling center where his body was found. The days between the shooting and finding his body were two of the longest days of our lives. Her land has two outbuildings which Card could have used for refuge. Our daughter has horses in one of the buildings that is a distance from the house, so they could never completely shelter in place inside because the horses needed tending. The helicopters with searchlights were also unsettling to their animals. Until Card was found, it was two long days and nights of fear and apprehension for our family. Of course this was just a fraction of the suffering which is continuing for those who lost loved ones or were injured in the actual shootings that night, but it is another consequence of this unnecessary violence.*

*For this personal reason, and as a member of the UCC's Social Action Committee who believes that we must do everything we can to make our state a more peaceful and safe place for all, I urge you to support this bill, LD 2224.*

*Respectfully Submitted,*

*Dianne Morse-Leonard, Waterford, ME*



**Testimony on March 5, 2024 at the Judiciary Committee's Public Hearing  
on LD 2086, An Act to Amend the Law Governing the Disposition of  
Forfeited Firearms**

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and Members of the  
Committee:

My name is the Rev. Dr. Stephen Hastings, a resident of Winthrop and the Pastor of the Dover-Foxcroft Congregational Church. I have also been pastor at Congregational churches in Winthrop and Kennebunk, and Presbyterian churches in Leeds and Hartford. Today, I am here on behalf of the Maine Conference of the United Church of Christ as the Chair of its Social Action Committee to **testify in support of LD 2086**.

In the aftermath of the mass shooting event in Lewiston on October 25, 2023 that took the lives of eighteen people and injured many others, the Social Action Committee of the Maine Conference hosted three gatherings across the Conference in early February. Our aim was twofold:

1. Help process the grief, and
2. Find meaningful ways to move forward in preventing gun violence.

As people of faith, we "rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep." Adding to the lamentation of weeping, though, Martin Luther King Jr. observed, "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter." It is clear that gun violence prevention matters to people who are frustrated that conversations usually end with the silence of "thoughts and prayers" and little, if any, redeeming action. And yet, the spiritual mandate for action is pervasive. As Christians and people of faith, we follow a Savior known as the Prince of Peace. We believe in love and non-violence as the powers that heal. We believe in putting away the swords and turning the spears into pruning hooks. In that Spirit, the Maine Conference affirms its commitment to gun violence prevention and its Resolution of 2013 to support laws that:

1. Ban the sale and possession of high-capacity rapid-fire weapons by individuals,
2. Ban the sale and possession of large ammunition magazines by individuals, and
3. Require universal background checks and safety courses for all sales of guns, including sales at gun shows and between private individuals.

Legislation responsive to these three guidelines, all or in part, is now coming before the 131<sup>st</sup> Maine Legislature. The Maine Conference voices support for LD 2086 as amended by Senator Carney to ban the sale, purchase, and transfer of bump stocks and other devices that augment weapons to fire like high-capacity rapid-fire machine guns.

As it says in scripture, "Faith without works is dead." Please take firm action in the name of those who died in Lewiston and on behalf of those who may yet be spared.

Submitted by,

The Rev. Dr. Stephen Hastings  
Maine Conference United Church of Christ  
Social Action Committee, Chair  
Winthrop Resident  
Minister in Dover-Foxcroft





## Testimony at the Judiciary Committee Public Hearing on LD 2086, An Act to Amend the Law Governing the Disposition of Forfeited Firearms

March 5, 2024

Senator Carney, Representative Moonen, and Members of the Committee:

Representative Kristen Sarah Cloutier, D – Lewiston; Senator Pinny Beebe-Center, D – Knox; Representative Matthew W. Moonen, D – Portland; Speaker Rachel Talbot Ross, D – Portland; Representative Victoria W. Doudera, D – Camden; Representative Samuel Lewis Zager, D – Portland; Representative Adam R. Lee, D – Auburn; Representative Margaret Craven, D – Lewiston; Senator Margaret Rotundo, D - Androscoggin

My name is the Kathy Woodside, a resident of Bar Harbor and a lay leader of the Bar Harbor Congregational Church United Church of Christ. I am offering testimony on behalf of the Maine Conference of the United Church of Christ (UCC) and as a member of its Social Action Committee to **testify in support of LD 2086**.

I offer my testimony from a somewhat different perspective than Stephen Hastings, the chair of the Maine Conference UCC's Social Action Committee. I support his testimony wholeheartedly, but I would like to offer a personal perspective. I grew up in Northern Maine in a hunting culture, as a child, my family depended on the annual deer hunt for food. It was a way of life...one that I did not question. A gun in the home was not uncommon, but in my home not visible until hunting season. Hunting accidents, resulting in death or injury may have happened, but I don't remember it to be a common occurrence. That would have been over sixty years ago. As they say – "times have changed".

The first mass shooting that I recall Columbine High School (Colorado) in 1999, when 12 students and one teacher were murdered and twenty-one others were injured. This pattern of violence has not only continued in the last two decades but has increased in frequency. Up until the mass shooting event on October 25, 2023 in Lewiston, Maine has been somewhat immune to this type of violence. Many have taken the attitude that it can't happen here...not in the state where the motto is "life...the way it should be". While others of who have seen repeated gun safety laws squelched in our legislature and mental health resources gutted...it was only a matter of time before we would experience what other communities have suffered.

The recent violence in Lewiston became even more personal for me when I learned that an extended family member who is part of the deaf community who frequented the bowling alley where the shooting took place on October 25<sup>th</sup> was a victim of the violence, that until that fateful day, had always been a safe gathering place for she and her friends. Her husband was injured and two friends were killed. Their grief and loss is personal...and life changing. This type of scenario cannot be allowed to play out in our state ever again.

For decades, efforts have been made by many gun safety advocates across this country, but legislation continues to fall short in creating laws that make our country as safe as other developed countries throughout the world who have stricter gun laws. The Maine Legislature has an opportunity to create laws that will do just that. The Maine Conference United Church of Christ and the Social Action Committee supports LD2086 amended by Senator Carney to ban the sale, purchase and transfer of bump stocks and other devices that augment weapons to fire rapidly like machine guns. I personally support this legislation because it is time to be proactive...to make a preemptive move to strike gun violence from the landscape of our precious state. I urge you to do the same.

Submitted by,  
Kathy Woodside  
Maine Conference United Church of Christ  
Social Action Committee Member  
Bar Harbor Resident  
Member of the Bar Harbor Congregational Church UCC