

We need red-flag laws

Letter to the editor, [Brunswick Beacon](#), 11.02.23

On Oct. 25, 18 people were shot to death and 13 injured in Lewiston, ME in America's 565th mass shooting this year. Hours later, mass shooting #566, in Clinton, NC, killed five more people. Maine and North Carolina are among [29 states](#) that refuse to enact red-flag laws allowing courts to take guns from individuals adjudicated dangerous to themselves or others.

The Maine suspect is an Army reservist and the poster child for red-flag laws. His Army commanders were so concerned about him, they [committed](#) him to a mental health facility for two weeks this past summer after he heard voices and threatened to "shoot up" his military base. His family [warned](#) police and military officials he was experiencing "acute" mental health issues shortly before the Lewiston shootings. If Maine had enacted and enforced a red-flag law, courts could have removed the guns he used to murder his innocent victims.

Guns are the [leading cause](#) of death for children and teens in NC. Still, NC's Republican politicians refuse to protect them. NC's Democrats have introduced red-flag [laws every year since 2018](#). Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper supports them. In 2022, Pres. Biden passed the [Bipartisan Safer Communities Act](#) authorizing federal grants to states that enact and enforce red-flag laws.

Every NC Republican Representative [voted against](#) it, including David Rouzer and gun shop owner Ted Budd, who brags that [mass shootings](#) boost his business. NC's Republican legislature blocks even this most obvious, common-sense legislation, refusing to enact red-flag laws, rejecting federal funds earmarked to protect NC's children. Courts [have upheld](#) red-flag laws, which [85% of Americans](#) support, as constitutional. Still, Republican politicians insist on letting dangerous individuals have guns, [flaunt](#) AR-15 lapel pins after mass shootings, and, like Republican Lt. Gov. Mark Robinson, promote the unconstitutional insurrectionist belief that the Second Amendment [lets](#) you [shoot](#) your elected representatives if the government "gets too big for its britches."

That's illegal and dangerous.

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