



State of Rhode Island
Office of the General Treasurer

James A. Diossa
General Treasurer

13 March 2024
The Honorable Robert E. Craven, Sr.
Chair, House Judiciary Committee

The Honorable Members of the House Judiciary Committee

RE: *2024-H 7217, An Act Relating to Criminal Offenses – Assault Weapons*
 2024-H 7373, An Act Relating to Criminal Offenses – Weapons

Chairman Craven:

I write in support of both 2024-H 7217 and 2024-H 7373 – common sense gun reforms that will make our state safer.

Our country has a gun problem and Rhode Island is no exception. Despite recent and commendable efforts to ban bump stocks, limit cartridge size and ban ghost guns, gun-related violence *continues* to impact far too many across our state.

As Mayor of Central Falls and a long-time member of Mayors Against Gun Violence, I have spoken to the friends and families of those that have fallen victim to gun violence. I have seen the human impact first-hand.

And while the human toll of gun violence is – without hesitation – devastating, we must also recognize that gun violence carries a real economic cost. Each year, my office helps hundreds of innocent victims cover the economic cost of violent crime through the Crime Victim Compensation Program (the “CVCP”). Through this program, crime victims – gun victims and their families included – can receive up to \$25,000 per criminal event to help offset the cost of medical care, lost earnings, or in the worst of circumstances burial expenses.

Each year, the CVCP helps thousands across our state. In the short time since I assumed office, the Program has distributed over \$225,000 to the families of homicide victims, many of which involved guns. While this is a vital program, I wish we never had to process another claim. Unfortunately, there is simply too great of a need for the CVCP. Gun violence has undoubtedly contributed to that need.

A statewide ban on assault weapons, and common-sense gun safety practices will save lives and help ensure a safer future for all Rhode Islanders. I therefore urge this Committee to act and support passage of these bills.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JD' or similar initials, enclosed within a circular flourish.

James A. Diossa
General Treasurer

cc: The Honorable K. Joseph Shekarchi
 The Honorable Christopher Blazejewski
 The Honorable Jason Knight
 The Honorable Justine Caldwell