



Chair Robert Craven
House Committee on Judiciary
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith St.
Providence, RI 02903

Hearing March 13, 2024

Subject: RI League of Women Voters Supports House Bill 7217 (AN ACT RELATING TO CRIMINAL OFFENSES - ASSAULT WEAPONS)

Honorable Chair Craven and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

I am writing to you on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Rhode Island to show our **strong support** for Representative Knight's bill **H 7217** (An Act Relating to Criminal Offenses-Assault Weapons).

Assault weapons are exceptionally deadly firearms commonplace in mass shootings. Between 2009 and 2020, when assault weapons were used in a mass shooting, 6 times as many people were shot, twice as many people were killed, and 22 times as many people were wounded per incident on average, compared to mass shootings where assault weapons were not used. Rounds fired from an assault weapon inflict greater damage to the human body than rounds from a typical handgun, and these guns can fire multiple high-powered rounds extremely fast. Assault weapons do not belong in the hands of civilians.

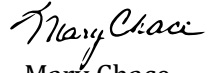
The League believes that restricting assault weapons is a common-sense public safety measure given the unconscionable devastation these weapons wreak on our society. H7217 would protect Rhode Islanders by reducing the likelihood of mass shooting injuries and deaths via assault weapons. Researchers estimate that if the federal law prohibiting assault weapons was in effect from 2005 through 2019, it would have prevented 30 mass shootings that resulted in 1,478 people shot and killed or wounded. Ten other states, including Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New York have passed legislation prohibiting assault weapons.

Nationally and in Rhode Island, the League believes that the proliferation of the number of semiautomatic assault weapons in our country is a public health and safety issue that should be addressed on both a federal and state level. **The League stands by all House bills that strengthen laws to ensure the safety of Rhode Islanders.**

We urge you to vote this bill out of committee and send it to the House Floor with a recommendation to pass H 7217.

Thank you on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Rhode Island. We appreciate your work to protect the people of Rhode Island by codifying into law common sense gun laws.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Chace". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Mary Chace

League of Women Voters of Rhode Island