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Sent: Monday, March 11, 2024 2:27 PM
To: House Judiciary Committee
Subject: testimony House Bills 7373 and 7217

March 13, 2024

Good Afternoon Chairman Craven and Members of the House Judiciary Committee. My name is Nancy Benoit. I live in Woonsocket and am a volunteer with the RI Coalition Against Gun Violence. I am here today to urge you to pass House bill 7373, Secure Firearm Storage, sponsored by Representative Caldwell, and House bill 7217, Regulating Assault Weapons sponsored by Representative Knight.

Requiring that all firearms are safely stored will save lives. A large percentage of school shooters got their guns from the homes of parents or relatives.

The easy access to guns in one's own home increases the chances of suicide and homicide among those in a household.

Military style assault weapons were designed for combat. Their rapid fire power causes multiple deaths or severe injury in a matter of seconds. The US had a National ban for 10 years which expired in 2004. Mass shooting fatalities were 70 percent less likely to occur during that 10 year period than either before or after the ban. Ten other states, including Massachusetts and Connecticut have bans.

The US has a gun homicide rate 26 times higher than that of similar income countries.

What the US does have that these countries don't have is a proliferation and easy accessibility of guns.

Finally, gun violence is now the #1 killer of children and teens in this country. We owe it to our children and grandchildren to do all we can to change this statistic.

Thank you,
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