

Esteemed members of the House Judiciary,

I hope I can take a moment of your time to voice my concerns with some upcoming legislation that will be viewed in committee this week.

H7217 – Assault Weapons Ban

Time and time again this comes up, and the facts and data are ignored. This bill is almost a carbon copy of the 90s federal assault weapons ban, one which an independent DOJ study had concluded had ZERO effect on violent crime. All this bill does is serve to restrict the rights of law abiding, tax paying, voting citizens. Further – in a post-*NYSRPA v. Bruen* world – the SCOTUS has remanded several assault weapons cases back to the lower courts for re-evaluation; a strong indicator that the initial rulings were incorrect and should be reversed – in this case in favor of the people, the right to keep and bear arms, and the 2nd Amendment.

We are fortunate that there are only ~50 deaths attributed to firearms in RI, with about half of them unfortunately being suicides. The majority of crime is not perpetrated by rifles of any nature, not to mention so called “assault weapons”. The FBI crime stats show only 25 murders in 2019 (latest available data) – 10 of which were from firearms, and none of which were rifles of any nature. Further – from the state’s own tracking of this very issue per a letter by AG Neronha in 2021 there were a grand total of THREE (3) criminal cases involving a semi-automatic rifle. Is this legislation an appropriate response to address a single digit number of crimes committed annually at best?

H7268 – Purchase Test

Imagine if you had to pass a test to vote or engage in free speech? Would that fly or pass constitutional muster? If a person is not prohibited under federal law, they have a constitutional right to purchase a firearm.

H7269 – Purchase Restrictions.

This has been tried in many states and studies have shown time and time again that this is ineffective. Virginia had it on the books for 10 years and repealed it because it was shown to have no affect on crime. Further *Nguyen v. Bonta* was just ruled upon in California of all places and the very same purchase limitation bill was stricken down as unconstitutional. All this will accomplish – aside from infringing on the rights of law-abiding Rhode Islanders, is open the state up for further litigation.

H7373 – Mandatory Storage

Preventable accidents are a tragedy, no one would ever suggest otherwise. But that is personal responsibility and should not limit my wife's ability to defend herself with our firearms while home alone and someone kicks in the door with malintent. When seconds may count, and while under stress/pressure, you may not have time nor the ability to open a safe. Why would the legislature seek to limit the ability of handicapped folks, women, or anyone for that matter to defend themselves? Furthermore – how exactly do you plan on enforcing such a law without obvious violations of the 4th Amendment and the right to privacy in one's home?

I do hope that you do the right thing and not pass these bills.

Thank you.

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