



March 13, 2024

The Honorable Robert E. Craven, Sr.
Chair, House Committee on Judiciary
State House, 82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903
via email: Rep-Craven@rilegislature.gov
via email: HouseJudiciary@rilegislature.gov

RE: H-7373 – Relating to Criminal Offenses – Weapons

Dear Chairman Craven:

I write today in support of H-7373 – Relating to Criminal Offenses – Weapons, which would require the safe storage of firearms, require a trigger lock to be included with purchase of rifles and shotguns, and require firearms dealers to post informational signs regarding safe storage. Firearms are considered lethal means, which are objects that may be used by individuals experiencing suicidal crisis. Increasing the time and distance between a person in suicidal crisis and their access to lethal means can reduce suicide risk and save lives.

According to the National Council on Aging, while older adults comprise 16.8 percent of the U.S. population, they make up approximately 22 percent of suicides. The National Institutes of Health cite key risk factors associated with suicide among older adults as social isolation, chronic health conditions, depression, and access to lethal means. Addressing these factors forms the foundations of any suicide prevention effort. Older adults tend to employ highly fatal methods when attempting suicide. Implementing strategies limiting access to firearms, medications, and other deadly means can save lives.

The Office of Healthy Aging (OHA) is the designated state unit on aging, and we are charged with advocating for laws, policies and investments that protect the health and safety of older adults and adults living with disabilities. By implementing safe storage practices, we can assist in decreasing the incidence of suicide among the older adult population and promote healthy aging.

As always, I thank you for your partnership and consideration of this letter, and I urge the committee to support this bill. Your leadership and advocacy for Rhode Island's older adults and their families are appreciated.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Maria E. Cimini". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Maria Cimini
Director

CC: The Honorable Members of the House Committee on Judiciary
The Honorable Justine A. Caldwell
Nicole McCarty, Esquire, Chief Legal Counsel for the Speaker
Lynne Urbani, Director of House Policy