



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 7373 (An Act Relating to Criminal Offenses - 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 Caldwell's bill **H 7373** (An Act Relating to Criminal Offenses – Weapons). This bill would protect citizens, especially children, from the danger of improperly stored firearms. Death by firearms has moved from the second leading cause to the leading cause of death in children ages 1 through 17 in the United States. Proper storage of firearms – locked and unloaded- is crucial in helping to ensure that children do not gain access to weapons with which they may accidentally or with intention injure or kill themselves or others. Improperly stored guns may be easily stolen, used to commit crimes, unintentionally discharged, or used in suicide by persons of any age.

This bill improves upon RI's current firearms storage law by including ALL unsecured firearms; amending the definition of "child" from anyone under age 16 to anyone under age 18; requiring locks to be sold with ALL guns; and requiring secure storage education via firearms dealers and school districts.

Holding gun owners accountable for the safe storage of their firearms is a smart public safety policy that will impact gun owners minimally and help prevent gun violence within homes and throughout our communities. The onus is on gun owners to safely store firearms in order to prevent injury and death by children or adults who may gain access to unsecured weapons.

The League supports H7373 as legislation which will promote the health and safety of children and adults. The League stands by all House bills that strengthen laws to ensure the safety of Rhode Islanders. Please vote this bill out of committee and send it to the House Floor with a recommendation to pass H7373.

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,


Mary Chace
League of Women Voters of Rhode Island