

March 12, 2024

Chairperson Robert E. Craven
House Committee on Judiciary
82 Smith St.
Rhode Island State House, Room 101

Subject: Support for House Bill 7373 (An Act Relating to Criminal Offenses - Weapons)

Honorable Chair Craven and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

I am writing to you to show my 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.

I believe H7373 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 H7373 out of committee and send it to the House Floor with a recommendation to pass H7373.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Patricia A Cole
20 Bayberry Road
Narragansett, RI