

Good afternoon, my name is Amy Mullen, I am the Vice President of the National Education Association and currently a math interventionist in Tiverton. I have worked in an elementary school for over 30 years. Every day, I walk into my classroom with a heart full of hope and a mind burdened by an unthinkable reality. The threat of gun violence, particularly from assault weapons, looms over our schools like a dark cloud.

Imagine, if you will, the sound of children's laughter suddenly shattered by the deafening rapport of gunfire. Picture innocent faces twisted in fear, small bodies huddled in dark corners, waiting, praying for

salvation. This is the nightmare that haunts me, that haunts every teacher and student in America. But it doesn't have to be this way.

The facts are clear and undeniable. When our nation had the courage to ban assault weapons, we saw a 37% decrease in gun massacres and a staggering 70% decline in the percentage of assault weapons traced to gun crimes. These aren't just numbers; they represent lives saved, families spared from grief, communities left unshattered.

We have a choice today – a choice to join our neighboring states of Massachusetts, Connecticut,

and New York in saying 'no more' to these weapons of war. A choice that aligns with the will of the majority of Americans and Rhode Islanders who support this ban. We have a chance to transform our children's fear into hope.

Let me be clear: these are not ordinary firearms. Assault weapons were designed for one purpose – efficient and effective killing. Their smaller bullets, fired at high velocity, don't just wound; they pulverize bone and obliterate organs. With a muzzle velocity nine times that of other weapons, they can eviscerate multiple people in seconds. Is this the

power we want available on our streets, in our neighborhoods, near our schools?

As a teacher, I've trained myself to be a human shield. I've memorized escape routes and hiding spots. I've practiced lockdown drills with children too young to truly understand why. But I refuse to accept that this is the best we can do. I refuse to believe that our children's safety is worth less than unfettered access to weapons of mass murder.

If we truly value our children, if we genuinely want to protect them, we must act now. We must pass this law and ban these assault weapons. No teacher

should have to wonder if today is the day they'll have to lay down their life for their students. No child should have to practice hiding from a killer.

I implore you, with every fiber of my being, to make the right choice. Ban assault weapons. Choose our children's lives over these instruments of death. Let Rhode Island be a beacon of hope and sanity in a nation too often darkened by senseless violence.

The time for thoughts and prayers has long passed. Now is the time for action. Our children are watching, waiting, hoping that we, the adults, will finally do what's necessary to keep them safe. Let's

not fail them. Let's ban assault weapons and give our children the gift of a safer future. Thank you.