

My name is Clara Hardy, I am a resident of North Providence RI. I would like to thank the sponsor of this bill, Representative Knight and this committee, for hearing my testimony. I am here to testify in support of HB 5436, a ban on assault weapons.

Rhode Island House Bill 5436, which proposes a ban on assault weapons, is a step in the right direction for ensuring public safety. The bill clearly defines the specific features that a semiautomatic firearm must possess to be affected by this ban. It is important to note that most firearms will not be included in this ban, aiming to strike a balance between gun ownership and public safety.

Specific Features of Affected Firearms

The bill targets semiautomatic firearms that are designed with military-style features. These weapons are distinct for their capacity to inflict mass casualties quickly. Features that qualify as a firearm under this ban include but are not limited to:

- Detachable magazines
- Folding or telescoping stocks
- Pistol grips
- Flash suppressors
- Grenade launchers

Such features are not necessary for civilian self-defense or hunting and are primarily designed for combat situations.

Civilians do not need to own military-style weapons whose sole purpose is to kill as many people as possible in the shortest time. The right to bear arms, enshrined in the Second Amendment, is based on a historical context that is vastly different from today's reality. If guns are supposed to keep us safe, then why does the United States have the highest rate of gun violence in the world?

Our priorities are backwards when we care more about protecting our guns than protecting our children in schools. It's time to reassess what "pro-life" truly means in the context of public safety. How can legislators, such as my own Representative, Doc Corvese, who is on this committee, claim to be "pro-life" yet support the ownership of assault weapons, whose primary function is to end life?

Passing this bill is not just about banning certain types of firearms; it's about making a statement that the safety of our communities is more important than the unrestricted right to own any type of weapon. It is a call to action for lawmakers to prioritize human lives over the interests of the gun lobby.

In conclusion, supporting RI House Bill 5436 is a necessary measure to curtail the availability of assault weapons and to take a meaningful step towards reducing gun violence in our society.