

**From:** David J LeDoux <qd1956@gmail.com>  
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**To:** House Judiciary Committee  
**Subject:** Testimony Opposing the RI Assault Rifle Ban Bill H-5436

## **Testimony Opposing the Rhode Island Assault Rifle Ban Bill H-5436**

**Presented to the House Judiciary Committee**

**Chairman: Robert E. Craven, Sr.**

March 21, 2025

**Good day Chairman Craven** and members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is David LeDoux and I am a resident of South Kingstown and a proud new member of the South County Rod and Gun Club. I am here today to express my strong opposition to the proposed assault rifle ban bill. This legislation, while well-intentioned, is overly broad, unfairly targets law-abiding gun owners, and fails to address the root causes of violence in our communities.

### **1. H-5436 Overreach**

**The bill's definition of "assault weapons" is overly broad and includes many firearms that are commonly used for lawful purposes, such as self-defense, hunting, and recreational shooting.** By targeting firearms based on cosmetic features rather than their functionality, the bill would criminalize the ownership of legally purchased firearms, including many semi-automatic pistols, rifles, and shotguns. This overreach punishes responsible gun owners who have never committed a crime and who use these firearms safely and responsibly.

### **2. Financial and Moral Impact on Law-Abiding Citizens**

**This bill would impose significant financial burdens on gun owners who** have invested in firearms for lawful purposes. Many of these firearms are valuable assets, and their confiscation or prohibition would result in substantial financial losses. Additionally, the moral implications of criminalizing lawful behavior are deeply concerning. Law-abiding citizens should not be treated as criminals for exercising their constitutional rights.

### **3. Ineffectiveness in Reducing Crime**

Studies have shown that bans on so-called "assault weapons" have little to no impact on reducing violent crime. Criminals do not obey gun laws, and such bans primarily affect law-abiding citizens. Instead of focusing on cosmetic features of firearms, we should address the root causes of violence, such as mental health issues, poverty, and lack of education.

### **4. Second Amendment Concerns**

**The Second Amendment guarantees the right of law-abiding citizens to keep and bear arms.** This bill infringes on that right by prohibiting the ownership of commonly used firearms. The Supreme Court

has consistently ruled that the Second Amendment protects firearms that are in common use for lawful purposes, which includes many of the firearms targeted by this bill.

## **5. Impact on Recreational Shooting and Community**

**As a member of the South County Rod and Gun Club, I have seen firsthand how recreational shooting fosters a sense of community, responsibility, and discipline.** This bill would undermine these positive aspects of gun ownership by restricting access to firearms that are commonly used for target shooting and competition. It would also discourage new shooters from participating in the sport, which has a long tradition of promoting safety and marksmanship.

### **Additional Opposition Points to Consider:**

**Due Process Concerns:** The bill may include provisions for confiscation or registration, which raise serious due process concerns.

**Self-Defense Rights:** Many of the firearms targeted by the bill are commonly used for home defense, and restricting access to them could leave law-abiding citizens vulnerable.

**Precedent for Further Restrictions:** This bill could set a dangerous precedent for future gun control measures that further erode Second Amendment rights.

**Law Enforcement Opposition:** Many law enforcement officials have expressed concerns that such bans are unenforceable and divert resources from more effective crime-fighting strategies.

## **6. Conclusion**

While the intention behind the Rhode Island Assault Weapons Ban Act of 2025 is to enhance public safety, it's crucial to consider the potential unintended consequences, including the broad scope affecting many commonly used firearms, the ambiguous definition of "assault weapons," questionable efficacy based on past bans, and the undue burden on responsible gun owners.

To sum up, **I urge the committee to reject this bill.** It unfairly targets law-abiding citizens, fails to address the root causes of violence, and infringes on our constitutional rights. Instead of enacting ineffective and overreaching gun control measures, we should focus on solutions that promote public safety while respecting the rights of responsible gun owners.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

**David J. LeDoux**

130 Blueberry Lane

West Kingston, RI 02892

401-644-9445

[QD1956@gmail.com](mailto:QD1956@gmail.com)