

Douglas Alexander  
20 Devon Ct.  
East Greenwich, Rhode Island  
March 21, 2025

RE: Support for House Bill H5436

Dear Chairman Craven and Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

My name is Doug Alexander. I live in East Greenwich, and my representative is Justine Caldwell. I am writing in strong support of Representative Knight's bill, H5436, to regulate assault weapons in Rhode Island.

Gun violence is a public health problem of massive proportions. I'm not writing to you as a physician or public safety expert—I'm just a father, a teacher, and a concerned citizen. Like so many others in our state, I want to raise my children in a society where they are not at risk of instant injury or death at the hands of an irresponsible shooter.

Nearly 9 in 10 of the highest-casualty mass shootings since 2009 — including some of the worst school massacres — involved at least one assault weapon.<sup>1</sup> Such assaults have devastating ripple effects on communities. Fear in schools is widespread; a 2023 poll found 38% of U.S. parents fear for their child's safety at school.<sup>2</sup> Studies also show that students exposed to school shootings suffer elevated rates of antidepressant use in subsequent years,<sup>3</sup> reflecting the profound mental health toll these events inflict. Each of these facts highlights the broader public health consequences of assault weapons in civilian hands and bolsters the case for this legislation.

We all have an interest in living in a safe, civil society. That means making reasonable choices about the kinds of weapons we allow in our communities. Military-style assault weapons are designed for maximum harm in minimal time. They don't belong on our streets, in our schools, or in our neighborhoods.

This bill is a common-sense step toward reducing the risk of mass violence and protecting public health. It's time we put the safety of our children and our communities ahead of access to weapons of war.

Thank you for your time and for considering this important legislation. I urge you to vote H5436 out of committee and move it to the House Floor with a recommendation for passage.

Sincerely,  
Douglas S. Alexander

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<sup>1</sup> <https://everytownresearch.org/rankings/law/assault-weapons-prohibited/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.envisionedk12magazine.com/2024/08/21/weathering-the-storm/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://siepr.stanford.edu/publications/health/surviving-school-shooting-impacts-mental-health-education-and-earnings-american>