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Representative Robert E. Craven  
Chair, House Judiciary Committee  
House Lounge  
Providence, RI 02903

**HB 5436 Position: Opposed**

**Re: HB 5436 "Assault Weapon" Ban**

Dear Chair Craven and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

The National Shooting Sports Foundation ("NSSF") is the trade association for America's firearms, ammunition, hunting, and recreational shooting sports industry. Its mission is to promote, protect and preserve hunting and the shooting sports. NSSF has a membership of more than 9,000 manufacturers, distributors, firearms retailers, shooting ranges, and sportsmen's organizations. Our manufacturer members make the firearms used by law-abiding Rhode Island sportsmen, the U.S. military and law enforcement agencies throughout the state. This is to notify you of the opposition of NSSF to HB 5436.

NSSF joins others in calling for a comprehensive approach that addresses many complex social issues, including school safety, preventing unauthorized firearms access, mental health, personal privacy, the popular media, and enforcing our existing laws while safeguarding constitutional rights.

Unfortunately though, HB 5436 is an extremely expansive piece of legislation that does little to impact criminals and will only force law-abiding gun-owners and manufacturers to flee the state. This bill will do nothing to increase public safety and will have astronomical costs to the state to implement these far-reaching policies. The state will be spending millions upon millions of dollars to implement gun control policies that will give Rhode Island only the perception that they are tough on crime. This bans on firearms based on cosmetic appearance, complete registration of firearms, and even confiscation of legally owned firearms for someone who moves to the state, all policies that have proven to be flawed.

NSSF is a resource for much needed technical accuracy in this discussion. It is inaccurate, for example, to state that semiautomatic firearms have no lawful purpose. For well over 100 years, many millions of law-abiding citizens have owned and responsibly used semiautomatic rifles, pistols and shotguns for hunting, target shooting, collecting and personal protection. Semiautomatics are among the most popular hunting rifles, shotguns and target pistols. Currently, millions of law-abiding Americans responsibly own and safely use modern sporting rifles, which may resemble military firearms in appearance, but which function no differently from other types of semiautomatic firearms. Modern sporting rifles are commonly used for hunting, target shooting, home defense and collecting.

One only needs to look as far back as the 1994 "Assault Weapons" Ban to find legislation which did little to increase public safety. One of the sections of this law was halting the production of "high capacity" magazines. This gun control strategy soon proved to be a failure. A comprehensive study by the Centers for Disease Control looked at the full panoply of gun control measures, including this proposed magazine ban, and concluded that none could be proven to reduce crime. Another study, commissioned by Congress, found that bans were not effective since "the banned weapons and magazines were never used in more than a modest fraction of all gun murders." These studies only demonstrate a ban that did not work or increase public safety.

The problem, of course, with such laws is that criminals routinely ignore them (after all, they are criminals). Law-abiding citizens who have every right to purchase and own firearms are the ones who are suffering by eliminating aspects of their activities with this type of law. Many law enforcement individuals are in agreement when questioned on the necessity of more gun control laws. Their sentiments focus on the fact that we currently have enough laws and that these laws just need to be strictly enforced.

The firearms industry has contributed over \$360 million in economic activity to Rhode Island in 2023 and employs over 600 people in the state. The firearms industry is still one of the few industries that has continued to grow while also contributing tax revenues to the state (to the tune of \$11 million).

HB 5436 would result in the loss of jobs in Rhode Island, as well as nationally, major losses of sales revenue to Rhode Island businesses and, as a result, the loss of substantial tax revenue for Rhode Island and other states.

**Ban rifle that accounted for .6% of homicides 2 out of 329.**

<b>Rhode Island - Murder, Types of Weapons, 2007 to 2019</b>									
Year	Total murders <sup>1</sup>	Total firearms	Handguns	Rifles	Shotguns	Firearms (type unknown)	Knives or cutting instruments	Other weapons	Hands, fists, feet, etc. <sup>2</sup>
2019	25	10	1	0	0	9	7	6	2
2018	16	12	1	1	1	9	2	1	1
2017	20	8	1	0	0	7	4	5	3
2016	29	12	5	0	0	7	9	6	2
2015	27	10	3	0	1	6	10	6	1
2014	25	12	5	0	1	6	7	5	1
2013	31	18	3	0	1	14	5	6	2
2012	34	19	7	0	0	12	5	6	4
2011	14	5	1	0	0	4	5	4	0
2010	29	16	2	1	1	12	5	6	2
2009	31	18	0	0	0	18	6	5	2
2008	29	18	9	0	0	9	6	4	1
2007	19	9	3	0	0	6	7	3	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>329</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>21</b>
<sup>1</sup> Total number of murders for which supplemental homicide data were received.									
<sup>2</sup> Pushed is included in hands, fists, feet, etc.									

The real focus of the Legislature should be on the people who commit crimes such as criminals, the mentally ill, and users of both prescription and illegal mind-altering drugs and other substances. They will always be able to obtain the firearms this bill would ban in the underground market, from outside of Rhode Island’s borders, or even within the state.

We must all work together to help prevent those who exhibit reckless disregard for human life and values access to firearms for criminal purposes. But we must also preserve the constitutional rights of tens of millions of law-abiding Americans to safely and responsibly own, store and use firearms for personal protection, hunting and recreation. America's firearms industry welcomes the opportunity to be a part of a respectful and constructive dialogue on this important topic and urge you to oppose HB 5436.

Sincerely,



Jake McGuigan