

## Ariana Costa

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**From:** Jason Laplante <jdl62378@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 25, 2025 11:56 AM  
**To:** House Judiciary Committee  
**Subject:** Opposition to House Bill: 5436

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Completed

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To whomever it way concern,

As a life long resident and career EMT / Firefighter for the State of Rhode Island, I oppose the assault weapons ban. Our 2nd Amendment is in place to protect Law Abiding Citizens, taking away these rights will not stop criminals or the mentally ill from wrong doing. In 19 years on the fire department I have only had 2 gun related patients; 1 a self inflicted suicide, where a .22 caliber pistol was used & the other a gang related shooting involving a small caliber pistol, which I believe was found to be illegally owned. Neither of which would have been stopped by this Bill.

**While any instance of gun violence is tragic, the data suggests Rhode Island's current policies and community safety measures are effective. It is crucial that policy discussions acknowledge these facts and avoid unnecessary restrictions that may not be needed in a state with such a low rate of firearm-related incidents.**

Recent statistics show that Rhode Island has one of the lowest firearm-related death rates in the country. According to the most recent finalized date from the CDC, Rhode Island saw 37 gun-related deaths in 2022, with a significant portion attributed to suicides rather than criminal activity. This marked a 45% decrease from the previous year. Additionally, provisional data for 2023 indicates that Rhode Island's firearm death rate was 4.8 per 100,000 people – 65% lower than the national average.

Over the past decade, Rhode Island has seen a 41% decline in gun deaths, even as the national rate increased by 36%. These figures demonstrate that our state does not have widespread gun violence issue and remains one of the safest in the country.

The Second Amendment of the United States Constitution states:

“A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.”

This language is clear and unambiguous. The right to bear arms is not a privilege granted by the government, but a pre-existing, inalienable right that shall not be infringed. The Founding Fathers understood that an armed citizenry is essential to maintaining the balance of power between the people and the government.

Similarly, the Rhode Island State Constitution, Article I, Section 22 reinforces this principle, stating:

“The right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed.”

Rhode Island's own constitution echoes the very words of the Second Amendment, affirming the importance of firearm ownership for self-defense, personal security, and resistance against tyranny. The phrase “shall not be infringed” is a definitive statement, leaving no room for excessive restrictions or governmental overreach.

Rhode Island must continue to uphold and defend the rights of its citizens against any unconstitutional restrictions. Lawmakers must recognize that the solution to crime and violence is not to disarm law-abiding individuals, but to enforce existing laws against criminals while respecting the rights of responsible gun owners.

I urge all elected officials and citizens of Rhode Island to stand firm in defense of our Second Amendment rights. Any legislation or regulation that seeks to undermine or restrict these rights must be met with unwavering opposition.

Sincerely,

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