

Anabella Mayorga

From: Jonathan Newkirk <newkirkjonathan3833@hotmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 17, 2025 3:16 PM
To: Rep. Shekarchi, K Joseph; Rep. Blazejewski, Christopher R.; Rep. Chippendale, Michael W.; Rep. Caldwell, Justine A.; Sen. Ruggerio, Dominick J.; Sen. Lawson, Valarie J; Sen. de la Cruz, Jessica; Sen. Valverde, Bridget G.; House Judiciary Committee
Subject: Re: HB5436 – AGAINST

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

Good Afternoon,

Resubmitting my testimony as I did not see it reflected on the 3/26/2025 agenda page featuring public testimony. Thank you. See below. Have a great day.

On Feb 23, 2025, at 12:05 PM, Jonathan Newkirk <newkirkjonathan3833@hotmail.com> wrote:

Hello Sir & Ma'am,

Thank you for taking the time to read my thoughts on the recently introduced legislation below.

I regard myself as a liberal-minded person and believe in finding common ground. But Rhode Island has taken firearm restrictions too far with HB5436 and it is no longer common ground. Any political leader who supports HB5436 will not enjoy my vote in the future.

I am writing to formally state I am *against* bill HB5436.

HB5436 AN ACT RELATING TO CRIMINAL OFFENSES -- RHODE ISLAND ASSAULT WEAPONS BAN ACT OF 2025 – **AGAINST**

- In 2024, RI had 18 gun homicides with 80% taking place in Providence County. This is one of the lowest rates nationally and should be celebrated. Statistically there is not a need for more gun restrictions in RI. There are far greater issues plaguing RI.

- Of the small amount of crime occurring with firearms in RI, 80% takes place in Providence county according to John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. Let's focus effort there rather than creating undue burden on the majority of firearms owners which are law abiding sporting community.

- The broad nature of the ban would severely impact deer, small game, bird and duck hunting – hunting is still the most sustainable, conservation-minded, and humane way of harvesting meat when compared to industrial farming. Industrial farming is a leading cause of greenhouse

gasses. Hunted game is free-range, organic. Hunting is sometimes inappropriately categorized as barbaric. Eating veal is barbaric and inhumane to me. Hunting is hard work and makes you appreciate your food in a deeper way.

- Lost tax revenue from firearms, sporting and hunting industry. According to trade associations that is slightly over \$15 million in taxes including property, income and sales based levies.

- This bill categorizes common semi-auto hunting shotguns which are not associated with crime such as Remington 1100, Remington 11-87 as assault weapons. This is absurd. Companies have been producing semi-auto shotguns for hunting and trap/skeet since the 1960's. They are very common and look like something Elmer Fudd would own. But they are semi-auto and have threads on the inside of the barrel to accept interchangeable chokes. A choke is a device that screws into the end of a shotgun barrel so you can appropriately change the range of your shotgun. Different chokes are needed depending on weight and intended distance of your shot. Using the correct choke is a big part of responsible and safe hunting.

- The bill affects very commonly used and collected antique firearms with great historical value which are not associated with crime anywhere in the U.S. such as M1 Garand and M1A. Both of these rifles are widely used in Civil Marksmanship Competitions nationally. These firearms are affected because they have bayonet attachments. Less than 1% of deaths in the Civil War were caused by bayonet let alone anyone ever hearing about a bayonet death nowadays (O'Connell, Robert L., "Arme Blanche", *Military History Quarterly*, Vol. 5, n° 1).

- This bill would put many firearm businesses and people out of work. With the likelihood of losing Hasbro as a business partner in RI, our priorities need to be about making this state more commercially competitive, not limiting basic civil rights and putting people out of business.

- The State pulling back over \$200K from the East Greenwich education budget when our local schools are falling apart and high school leadership is resigning, are far greater concerns to the East Greenwich community than gun violence. Many of my neighbors feel similar. Not all will write.

- Poverty, homelessness, addiction, education and the rising cost of college education are far greater threats to our community than gun violence statistically. The average RI teenager is 10x more likely to die from fentanyl overdose than gun violence.

- The underhanded nature in which second amendment bills get passed in this state is distasteful. It is Machiavellian and not the behavior I expect from our leadership.

Thank you,

Jonathan Newkirk