

Ariana Costa

From: Jonathan N <toydrone@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 25, 2025 11:58 AM
To: House Judiciary Committee
Subject: Against house bills 5436, 5443, 5651, 5652, 5654

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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My name is Jonathan Newkirk. I'm a native Rhode Islander, a resident of East Greenwich, father of 2, hunter and sportsman club member.

I am against house bills 5436, 5443, 5651, 5652, 5654.

According to congress.gov, data collection practices regarding active shooter events varies widely among independent groups. For example, the non-profit group *The Gun Violence Archive* (GVA) claims a number for mass-shootings 49 times greater than the FBI within the same time period. [2021–2023 FBI/40, GVA/1,965.] (*How to define mass shootings*, 2025). To keep my statistics honest, I will rely mainly on CDC and FBI crime data numbers.

“Firearm injury”, as defined by CDC and FBI, includes suicides, accidents and homicides. Interesting fact, according to the CDC, Rhode Island’s firearm injury rate has been one of the lowest in the country for the past 10 years. In 2022, Rhode Island’s Firearm Injury Rate was 5x below the national average and the lowest in the country (3.1 people per 100,000). This means other states may benefit from more gun laws, but statistically, Rhode Island is consistently safer than every other state, including those *with* assault weapon bans.

Our children are 10x more likely to die from a fentanyl overdose than die from a gun. 64% of RI firearms injuries are suicides. 36% are accidents and homicides. 80% of RI homicides take place in Providence County (John Hopkins, 2022 data). Suicide prevention and focus on our vulnerable communities is where RI should be leading its efforts, not more gun laws.

A *Mayors Against Illegal Guns* report indicates that mass shootings compose less than 1% of gun murders recorded by the FBI. The survey also found that 75% of incidents classified as mass-shootings *did not involve firearms considered to be “assault weapons.”* The report also stated, domestic or family violence was a factor closely connected to 57% of all cases.

The bills that are being proposed today are far-reaching and would classify 90 year old antiques with museum interest as assault weapons (M1 Garand invented in 1936 and served in WW2). Collectibles such as the M1 Garand which the ATF itself classifies separately as historically significant and is widely used in national programs like Civilian Marksmanship competitions Rhode Island would classify as an assault weapon. A Ruger 10/22 which is one of the most popular recreational firearms since 1964 would be classified as an assault weapon for the mere addition of a competition barrel with threaded end.

I urge you to reconsider these bills, especially HB5436 as they lack statistical merit and impose undue burden on law-abiding sportsmen and women. We don't need more firearm laws. Rhode Island is already firearm safe.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2024, October 3). *Rhode Island*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/states/rhodeisland/ri.htm>

How many people die from gun-related injuries in Rhode Island each year?. USAFacts. (2025, March 11). <https://usafacts.org/answers/how-many-people-die-from-gun-related-injuries-in-the-us-each-month/state/rhode-island/>

How to define mass shootings: Potential policy implications. congress.gov. (2024, November 19). <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R48276>

State Data: Rhode Island. Center for Gun Violence Solutions. (n.d.). <https://publichealth.jhu.edu/center-for-gun-violence-solutions/rhode-island#:~:text=Providence%20County%20had%20the%20highest,in%20Washington%20County%20in%202022>.