

March 25, 2025

Kelly L. Searle

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RE: Bill number HB-5436 Assault Weapons Ban, my viewpoint: AGAINST PASSAGE

Mr. Chairman Representative Robert E. Craven,

I am writing to you today, to oppose the passage of the Assault Weapons Ban, bill number HB-5436. Sir, I am a mother first and foremost. My son and my daughter mean more to me than my life. I am also a law-abiding citizen, a registered Democrat, and a firearms owner.

I wholeheartedly believe that there indeed needs to be more regulations to prevent mass shootings and school shootings. I am also a mental health registered nurse, and I fully understand how mental health can impact a person's thought process and cause people who at times fly under the radar to commit heinous crimes like mass shootings. There needs to be more done in the mental health community and for those who live on the fringes of society. However, this bill does not address anything to prevent these weapons getting into the wrong hands. This bill restricts and goes against the constitutional rights of legal gun ownership by sane, law-abiding Rhode Islanders.

Sir, I have lived in Rhode Island most of my life and I am a single mother living in Warwick. A few years ago, I began training at local gun ranges, to safely own and utilize firearms because in this crazy world, I feel the need to be able to defend myself and my children. I am training to defend us, should anyone approach us with any nefarious intent. This bill that is being pushed into the budget does nothing except take away our defense. Criminals will always find a way to access weapons (assault weapons, military style weapons, etc.) Please don't let the rest of us become fish waiting in a barrel to be shot, so to speak. I don't have a problem with registering my firearms or going through any other paperwork or waiting periods because I am a person of sound mind

with no intent to cause harm. This bill, however, is so poorly written and unconstitutional that it is frankly a slap in the face of all legal gun owners in this state. I do not own any military style weapons, nor do I have the desire to. My firearms consist of semi-automatic pistols, specifically 9mm and .22 caliber with the legal 10 round magazines. I also have one shotgun for self-defense, and a .22 caliber rifle that I just enjoy shooting for fun. This bill includes wording restricting all semi-automatic weapons including my 10 round pistols that I would use for self-defense. It's not just military style AR and AK weapons that fit under the umbrella term of semi-automatic weapons but also self defense weapons like my pistols that would be affected too. I know that as a representative that you would want to do the right thing, and I hope that you will choose against the passing of this bill—not to not have any further restrictions, but simply restrictions that are constitutional and focused on the right things, such as mental health advocacy and weapons not being accessible to the wrong hands. I know that you would want your mother, your sisters, and your sons and daughters to be able to defend themselves against an attacker. Please don't deny your fellow Rhode Islanders that right either. Thank you for your service and for your time.

Best regards,

Kelly L. Searle