

March 24, 2025

****Testimony Against H5436: Proposed Semi-Automatic Ban****

Dear Members of the Rhode Island General Assembly,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to H5436, the proposed legislation that seeks to ban semi-automatic firearms in our state. While I understand the importance of addressing gun violence and ensuring public safety, I believe this bill is not the solution and raises significant concerns for law-abiding citizens.

1. ****Erosion of Constitutional Rights****: The Second Amendment of the United States Constitution guarantees the right to keep and bear arms. This proposed ban infringes upon that right by targeting a broad category of firearms that are commonly owned and responsibly used by millions of Americans for self-defense, hunting, and recreational shooting.
2. ****Ineffectiveness in Reducing Crime****: Evidence from other states with similar bans suggests that such measures do little to deter crime or prevent violence. Criminals, by definition, do not abide by laws, and restricting access to firearms for law-abiding citizens only serves to leave them more vulnerable.
3. ****Impact on Responsible Gun Owners****: The proposed legislation unfairly penalizes responsible gun owners who have undergone background checks, complied with existing laws, and demonstrated safe firearm practices. Semi-automatic firearms are widely used for legitimate purposes, including personal protection and competitive sports.
4. ****Economic Consequences****: The ban could have a detrimental impact on local businesses, including firearm retailers and manufacturers, as well as the broader economy. It may also discourage tourism related to hunting and shooting sports, which contribute significantly to our state's revenue.
5. ****Focus on Real Solutions****: Instead of imposing blanket bans, I urge the General Assembly to focus on measures that address the root causes of violence, such as improving mental health services, enhancing community policing, and enforcing existing laws more effectively.

In conclusion, I respectfully request that you reconsider H5436 and work towards solutions that uphold the rights of law-abiding citizens while addressing the issue of gun violence in a meaningful and effective manner. Let us strive for policies that unite our community rather than divide it.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Mark Northup
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