



March 26, 2025 - Hearing before the House Judiciary Committee.

Subject: RI League of Women Voters Supports House Bill 5436 (AN ACT RELATING TO CRIMINAL OFFENSES - ASSAULT WEAPONS)

Honorable Chair Craven and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

I am writing to you on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Rhode Island to show our strong support for Representative Knight's bill **H 5436** (AN ACT RELATING TO CRIMINAL OFFENSES --RHODE ISLAND ASSAULT WEAPONS BAN ACT OF 2025).

Assault weapons are exceptionally deadly firearms commonplace in mass shootings. Between 2015 and 2022, when assault weapons were used in a mass shooting, 6 times as many people were shot, twice as many people were killed, and 23 times as many people were wounded per incident on average, compared to mass shootings where assault weapons were not used. Rounds fired from an assault weapon inflict more horrific damage to the human body and are more likely to cause fatality than rounds from a typical handgun. (Everytown for Gun Safety)

Nationally and in Rhode Island, the League believes that the proliferation of the number of semiautomatic assault weapons in our country is a public health and safety issue that should be addressed on both a federal and state level. A poll conducted in February 2025 indicated that 64% of Rhode Islanders support a ban on the sales and manufacture of assault weapons. (Providence Journal). In the absence of federal law prohibiting assault weapons, it is up to the Rhode Island state legislature to join the ten other states which have passed such legislation, including Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New York.

Assault weapons are weapons of warfare and do not belong in the hands of civilians. The League believes that restricting assault weapons is a common-sense public safety measure given the unconscionable devastation these weapons wreak on our society. **H 5436** would protect Rhode Islanders by reducing the likelihood of mass shooting injuries and deaths via assault weapons.

We urge you to vote this bill out of committee and send it to the House Floor with a recommendation to pass **H 5436**. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Mary Chace, Co-Chair of the Advocacy Committee, League of Women Voters of Rhode Island

