

March 24, 2025  
(Citizens' name(s))  
Everytown, USA

Fellow citizen,

This is an open letter defending liberty and freedom from tyrannical progressivism. As a general rule I am opposed to any infringements of personal liberties. I am loathe to use words such as reasonable and rational when describing these egregious, so called common sense legislative efforts at governmental control and intrusions. These hearings provide scant opportunity for constructive debate when what is needed is a true colloquium and dialectical imperative following logic, facts and real reasoning as to why 'feel good', gun control laws are usually not good. I'll let others present those arguments which the majority of our elected officials have consistently ignored.

My testimony, in this case in opposition especially but not limited to R.I. HB 5436, like most of those who eschew guns, is based on an appeal to emotion. When I think of "Common Sense" I think of Thomas Paine. When I think of why governments are instituted and laws are passed I think of John Locke's "...Treatises of Government" - the very foundational core of the Declaration of Independence.

I am not insensitive to others fears and the horrors of war; by God's good grace, I was spared the trauma experienced by many of my fellow corpsmen during the Vietnam conflict - fortunately, I never pounded the paddies in country but I still understood, then - as now - the meaning of "Duty, Honor, Country".

I grew up in the days of Davy, Gene, Roy - to name only a few - and a black-hatted good guy by the name of Hopalong! I was correctly taught a healthy respect for firearms and other things that can be used or incorrectly misused! I frankly wonder how some have an almost hyperphobic fear of an inanimate object.

So, how do we reconcile such seemingly diametrically opposed viewpoints. I recently read a book by David Yamane titled "Gun Curious: A Liberal Professor's Surprising Journey Inside America's Gun Culture". Perhaps this book might allay some fears and answer some questions while providing a common basis for discussion about why pro-liberty believers are quite often so adamant about protecting individual rights and freedoms!

How someone chooses to or not to protect themselves - let alone others - is a very personal matter! But, if you choose not to defend at least yourself, then do not deign to deny me my right to choose! Sometimes, while waiting a mere minute for help, that minute can be a lifetime in hell.

Is it true that I have heard anecdotally that some of our elected officials have disparaged constitutional rights and plan on wielding the usurpating sword of injustice by statutorily eradicating the U.S. Constitution's second amendment as well as our R.I. Constitution's companion article 1, section 22? Wouldn't they also be violating R.I. General Laws section 36-14-1?

Did a recent poll bother to ask whether or not people want more gun control? Or more loss of liberty? Remember what happened to our rights during the Covid-19 pandemic! Even a temporary cessation during a bonafide emergency is totally unacceptable and should never happen again! Bearing that in mind, I am forced to ask: 'why - during

the "Covid pandemic and 2020 summer of love" - thousands of citizens - and many for the first time - were buying guns?'

Over the years, instead of being leaders of liberty, the majority of our state legislators have continuously constricted our natural rights. I find it abhorrent that they would blithely tread upon the sacrifices of all those who gave some and some who gave all!

Is it ironic that our state motto is Hope? Perhaps we need a revival of "An appeal to heaven" like what was on the 1775 Pinetree Flag which will lead us again to another intervention by Divine Providence and hopefully remind our elected officials neither to violate natural and common laws nor to abrogate their oath of office or their duty to honor both the U.S. and R.I. Constitutions.

Respectfully,  
Philip Lappin  
Warwick, R.I.