

## Roberta DiMezza

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**From:** Thom Nichols <tmnichols@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 12, 2025 10:48 PM  
**To:** House Judiciary Committee  
**Subject:** H5436 written testimony

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Dear Roberta DiMezza, and members of the House Judiciary Committee:

Please accept this written testimony in opposition of H5436 which is before the House Judiciary.

As a lifelong progressive and Democrat, I have always believed in fighting for the rights and well-being of marginalized communities. However, in recent years, I have come to realize that an important right—that of self-defense—has been largely ceded to the right wing. I purchased my first firearm in 2017. Since that time I have met more and more left-leaning individuals, many from marginalized and LGBTQ+ communities, who recognize the necessity of taking responsibility for their own safety in an increasingly hostile political climate.

I recently held and fired an AR for the first time. They are nothing special. I realized the reason that ARs are popular is that they are incredibly cheap. They are like the Honda Civic of guns. That's it really. They are simple and cheap.

This bill is like if lawmakers saw kids racing souped up Hondas and thought "jeez those cars are dangerous, we should ban cars with spoilers and decals." You want to ban firearms that have a pistol grip and a handguard. The reason this is upsetting is because the informed observer will realize "if they can ban a car because it has a spoiler, they can pretty much ban anything." So it is with this bill. It's arbitrary and chooses a plethora of popular features none of which are actually pertinent to the function of the firearm. They just happen to be common features on the Honda Civic of firearms, and others like it.

The unfortunate reality is that firearms are not going away in the United States. We all watched President Trump pardon violent insurrectionists. The FBI and DOJ are no longer apolitical. Given that reality, progressives here in RI and across the country are realizing they need to take responsibility for their own self defense, up to and including firearms ownership.

Despite this, Rhode Island Democrats continue to push performative gun control legislation that will not meaningfully affect public safety. Bill H5436 is not the political win that its proponents make it out to be. It will impose harsh restrictions on thousands of lawful citizens, an increasing number of whom are also progressives like myself. These policies serve as distractions from the real and urgent issues that our state faces—a failing healthcare system, struggling schools, unaffordable housing, crumbling transportation infrastructure and economic stagnation. Worse, these policies risk alienating not just moderates but also progressive gun owners such as myself, who are being forced to rethink whether or not the Democratic Party represents our best interests.

For further insight, I encourage you to review the discussions taking place in our communities, which highlights the importance of the Second Amendment for Progressives and marginalized people in Rhode Island:

- [We all want to end violence in our communities. New gun bans are not the way to do it.](#)
- [The Second Amendment is for All Rhode Islanders](#)
- [Shooting Range Queer Friendly](#)

Thank you for your time, and for opposing H5436 in its entirety.

Thom Nichols  
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