

Subject: H-5436 Assault Weapons Ban 2025 -- AGAINST PASSAGE

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To: RI House Judiciary <HouseJudiciary@rilegislature.gov>, "Robert E. Craven, Sr." <rep-craven@rilegislature.gov>

To: Chairman Representative Robert E. Craven, Sr.

RI House Judiciary Committee

Re: H-5436 Assault Weapons Ban 2025 -- AGAINST PASSAGE

Dear Chairman Craven and House Judiciary Committee Members,

I am a long-time citizen of Rhode Island and resident of Providence.

I write to oppose, and urge you to oppose, H-5436 -- the proposed so-called "Rhode Island Assault Weapons Ban Act of 2025."

The bill does not offer any statement of purpose or other explanation and thus invites the public to guess what its objective may be. The bill proposes to ban an extraordinarily wide variety of legal firearms, many of which typically are used for lawful self-defense, defense of third persons and property, sport, and recreation by persons who reside within the state of Rhode Island and across the country.

The bill is overbroad, in that, for example -- if I read the lengthy definitional section correctly -- it appears to include in its definition of "assault weapon" virtually every semi-automatic handgun (11-47.2-2)(2)(v), (vi)(A)-(E), (viii), (ix). Thus, on close inspection, the bill finally reveals itself to be a disingenuous attempt to ban the most commonly used firearms that are not ordinarily considered to be "assault weapons" -- which phrase most people assume refers generally to weaponry typically used by the military for combat. If this bill were to become law, one has to wonder which firearms would remain legally available to the average law-abiding citizen to purchase, possess, and utilize. The bill is of dubious constitutionality and appears to have been drafted by persons who have little or no experience with firearms.

Leaving us to guess what the bill's true purpose may be, the unstated but implicit premise seems to be that, if enacted into law, the bill would somehow reduce future violent crimes that would have involved the use of these types of firearms. That premise is not only illogical, but also lacks any serious basis and thereby insults the intelligence of the community. It assumes persons who knowingly and willfully disobey existing firearm laws when they commit violent crimes with firearms will instead change their behavior, suddenly become law-abiding citizens, obey this proposed new law, and not commit crimes with firearms of the types listed.

To the contrary, if approved, this bill would place serious and life-threatening restrictions on law-abiding citizens (those who obey our laws), while doing nothing to address the certainty that those who commit violent crimes with what this bill attempts clumsily to define as "assault weapons" (those who do not obey our laws) -- will simply continue to commit those crimes with less fear of resistance from law-abiding citizens. The bill's proponents undoubtedly know this.

If the goal of this bill is to prevent or reduce certain types of violent crimes involving the use of firearms, then may I suggest instead that its proponents focus their efforts on seeing that the many firearm-related laws that are already in effect, but are rarely enforced with any real seriousness, are enforced firmly. Simply attempting to enact new firearm laws, while at the same time making little to no effort to enforce those firearm laws already on the books, brings to mind the often-repeated definition of insanity: repeating the same action multiple times and expecting a different result. Proposing new bills such as this may yield short-term publicity and momentary chest-beating opportunities for its proponents and may serve to bamboozle a small minority of voters, but will achieve nothing beyond that.

Our rights under the Second Amendment, which among many other things protect our rights under the First Amendment, are truly historically unique, extraordinary, and often misunderstood. With some thoughtfulness and care, both absent from this proposed bill, we can and should work to reduce firearm-related crime while at the same time remaining vigilant to ensure that those efforts do not infringe in any way upon or otherwise erode our vital Second Amendment protections.

Respectfully,



William G. Touret

Providence, RI