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March 26, 2025

The Honorable Robert E. Craven, Sr., Chair  
House Committee on Judiciary  
State House  
82 Smith St.  
Providence, RI 02903

**RE: H 5443 -- An Act Relating to Health and Safety -- Suicide Prevention—Voluntary  
Firearms Restrictions Act**

Dear Chair Craven:

Please accept this letter of support for H 5436, legislation that would create a process for an individual to voluntarily be either temporarily or indefinitely added to a list restricting their rights to purchase or possess firearms. The individual may also request removal from the restricted list and all individual records related to the person's inclusion on the list would be destroyed and not subject to the *Access to Public Records Act*.

As the Director of the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH), I am deeply concerned about the adverse effects of firearm-related injuries and violence in both Rhode Island and in our nation. Gun violence is a public health crisis.

H 5443 simply creates a process and opportunity for an individual to voluntarily be either temporarily or indefinitely added to a list restricting their rights to purchase or possess firearms. Providing such a pathway allows individuals who may be struggling with suicide ideation to take a more active role in their own safety planning and suicide prevention. Ensuring that an individual also has the ability to request removal from the restricted list and all individual records destroyed and not subject to the State's *Access to Public Records Act* represents a respectful, person-centered approach focused on prevention (as opposed to being punitive). The bill aligns with the State's suicide prevention efforts around the secure offsite storage of firearms. Other states have introduced and/or passed similar laws, including Virginia, Colorado, Washington, and Utah.

The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) notes that "most individuals who are prevented from making a suicide attempt via one method typically do not go on to attempt with another method; if they do substitute another method, it will likely be less lethal." According to AFSP, "Firearms are involved in over 50% of all suicides in the U.S. Suicide also accounts for most firearm deaths in the U.S." (See: [AFSP Brief](#)).

A New England Journal of Medicine article notes that "delaying firearm purchases has been found to reduce gun suicides without increasing the number of suicides carried out by other means." (See: [New England Journal of Medicine, 2020](#).) A 2016 study published in the Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior Journal found that 46% of individuals who were at high risk for suicide stated that they would put their own name on a Do-Not-Sell list. (See: [Life-Threatening Behavior Journal, 2016](#))

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Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this proposed legislation that will save lives.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jerome M. Larkin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end.

Jerome M. Larkin, MD  
Director

CC: The Honorable Jennifer Boylan  
The Honorable Members of the House Committee on Judiciary  
Nicole McCarty, Esquire, Chief Legal Counsel  
Lynne Urbani, Director of House Policy

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