



Family Court of the State of Rhode Island
One Dorrance Plaza
Providence, RI 02903

MICHAEL B. FORTE
CHIEF JUDGE

The Honorable Robert E. Craven
Chair
House Judiciary Committee
State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

March 5, 2025

Re: 2025—H 5651

Dear Chairman Craven and Members of the
House Judiciary Committee:

I am aware that the above-referenced bill providing access to juvenile justice records for the purpose of a firearm background check by the National Instant Criminal Background Check System ("NICS") has been referred to the House Judiciary Committee.

The proposed bill as written is overly broad and vague. It does not specify what particular record or category of records would be accessible by NCIS or what information and in what form would be disclosed to the NICS. Records in Juvenile Justice files contain a great deal of sensitive, confidential information as well as documents having no bearing on the offense with which a juvenile is charged. Likewise documents in police records may contain sensitive and confidential information. These documents include mental health records, counseling records, and information relating to juveniles other than the alleged perpetrator of the offense.

Additionally, R.I. Gen Laws § 11-47-37 prohibits the sale of a firearm to anyone under 21 years of age with limited exceptions involving supervision. The proposed bill would therefore not have any impact on the ability of any person under 21 years of age to purchase a firearm in this state. Nor would it have any impact on the ability of a person under the age of 21 who is a resident of Rhode Island to purchase a firearm in any other state as 18 U.S.C. § 922 (b) prohibits

Honorable Robert Craven

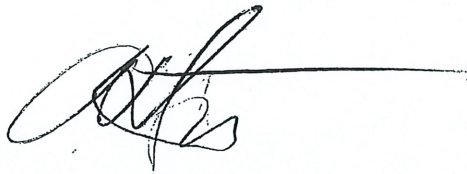
March 5, 2025

Page 2

the sale of a firearm to any person whose home state prohibits the sale of a firearm to that person. The proposed bill's effect would be limited to a person under 21 years of age who once resided in Rhode Island but currently resides in a state where purchasing a firearm is legal and is purchasing a firearm in a state where the sale is legal. On balance the limited effect the legislation may have on restricting the availability of firearms does not outweigh the important state interest of protecting juveniles from the social and economic stigmatization that accompany criminal convictions.

For these reasons, I cannot support 2025 H-5651.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Forte", followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Michael B. Forte