

CITY of WARWICK

Colonel Bradford E. Connor
Chief of Police



Frank J. Picozzi
Mayor

POLICE DEPARTMENT
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February 24, 2024

Representative Robert E. Craven, Sr.
Chair of the House Judiciary Committee
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith Street-Room 205
Providence, RI 02903

Re: ***Opposition to House Bill H-7051 Prohibiting Outdoor Gun Ranges Within a One Mile Circumference or Any School (Grades K-12) and All Connected Grounds and Sports Fields***

Dear Chairman Craven:

I am writing to oppose **House Bill 7051**, introduced by Representative Brandon Potter which seeks to prohibit outdoor gun ranges within one mile of a school. While I fully understand the importance of ensuring safety and security of our educational institutions, this proposed legislation would have a detrimental effect on the Warwick Police Department's ability to properly train and maintain our officer's proficiency with firearms.

The Warwick Police Range, located at 131 Range Rd has been in operation for decades without any complaint or concern from the Warwick School Department. Our agency, along with several other law enforcement agencies throughout the state rely on this range for legislatively mandated annual training and qualifications. Amongst those that utilized the Warwick Range is the RI Municipal Police Training Academy; where new recruits become proficient with the shot gun and patrol rifle weapon systems. Each of these skills is a necessary component of recruit training and is a vital skill for proficient police response; particularly when responding to active threats or school shootings.

The Warwick Police Department maintains a positive relationship with our surrounding neighbors to include our schools. Notification is made when shooting outside the normal dates and times occurs and we enjoy use of this facility during our community outreach programs. The range hosts youth shooting programs, is enjoyed by the Warwick Range Activities Committee and is used by our citizens police academy to name a few.

If approved, this bill would not only serve to close down this much needed facility but would have a direct impact on other police ranges throughout the state. This bill would have a negative impact on our ability to train our officers and would have a financial impact on the cities and towns that use these ranges, causing them to rent range space in other towns and require their officers to travel out of the city in order to conduct necessary training.

Thank you for allowing me to submit this written testimony and I am available for any follow-up questions you of the committee may have.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Col. Connor", followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Colonel Bradford E. Connor,
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President
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