

Kenneth J. Hopkins
Mayor



Colonel Michael J. Winquist
Chief of Police

"A Nationally Accredited Agency"

5 GARFIELD AVENUE
CRANSTON, RHODE ISLAND 02920
Phone (401) 942-2211 TDD 943-1410
Fax (401) 477-5113

January 22, 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. While it is not clear what this legislation's impetus is, it appears Representative Potter is continuing to make a veiled attempt to close the Cranston Police Department outdoor firing range, as it is the only outdoor range that I am aware of close to a school and athletic field.

The Cranston Police Department firing range has been in existence on Phoenix Avenue since the 1940s, well before the Cranston High School West was built and before many surrounding neighborhood homes were constructed. During my over nine-year tenure as the Chief of the Cranston Police Department, we have never received a single complaint from high school students or faculty about the range. There is no danger as all rounds are fired in the opposite direction from the school against a cliff wall and grass berm several feet high. The noise that reaches the school is minimal and within the decibel range allowed by city ordinance. The range is a critical resource for the members of the police department as it is used to ensure that all Officers are proficient with their department-issued firearms as required by state law. The range is no longer used by Rhode Island Police Municipal Police Training Academy which has greatly reduced the volume of shooting.

While there have been a few noise complaints, particularly during the springtime when some neighbors have their windows open, we do our best to restrict firing to certain hours and no longer allow outside law enforcement agencies to fire rifles or shotguns due to the elevated level of noise that these weapons can



cause. We are also researching sound mitigation options to include partially or fully enclosing the range. These improvements would be costly and depend on the availability of funds and an assurance that any sound mitigation efforts would be meaningful. Moving the range is not an option due to environmental restrictions and the lack of city-owned property that could accommodate such a facility.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (401) 477-5001.

Sincerely

Colonel Michael J. Winkvist
Chief of Police

