

Chairperson Robert Craven  
House Judiciary Committee  
Rhode Island House of Representatives  
Rhode Island State House  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI 02903

2024-HB 7373 and 7217 SUPPORT

March 13, 2024

Dear Chairperson Craven:

I am writing to you today on behalf of the Rhode Island Chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians to express our strong support for legislation concerning the safe storage of firearms (H7373) and the banning of assault weapons (H7217). As frontline healthcare providers, we witness the devastating consequences of gun violence firsthand, and we believe that these measures are critical steps towards reducing firearm-related injuries and deaths in our communities.

First and foremost, we urge you to prioritize the enactment of legislation mandating the safe storage of firearms in households across Rhode Island. Time and again, we have seen the tragic outcomes that result from the improper storage of guns, particularly when they are accessible to children and individuals who should not have access to them. The Family Room in our emergency departments serves as a somber reminder of the lives lost due to preventable accidents and acts of violence involving firearms. By requiring gun owners to store their firearms securely in locked containers or with locking devices, we can significantly reduce the risk of unintentional shootings and unauthorized access to firearms, especially among vulnerable populations such as children and individuals in crisis.

Furthermore, we wholeheartedly endorse the ban on assault weapons in Rhode Island. Assault weapons are designed for rapid and efficient killing, and their widespread availability poses a grave threat to public safety. As emergency physicians, we have witnessed the devastating impact of shootings and other acts of violence perpetrated with assault weapons. These weapons of war have no place in our communities, and their continued availability only serves to escalate the lethality of gun violence incidents. By enacting a ban on assault weapons, Rhode Island can take a proactive stance towards preventing future tragedies and safeguarding the well-being of its residents.

In conclusion, we urge you to support legislation that promotes the safe storage of firearms and bans assault weapons in Rhode Island. As healthcare providers committed to saving lives, we believe that these measures are essential components of a comprehensive approach to reducing gun violence and protecting public health. We stand ready to assist you in any way possible and look forward to working together towards a safer and healthier Rhode Island for all.

Sincerely,



Joseph Lauro, MD  
President

