



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
OFFICE OF GOVERNOR DANIEL J. MCKEE

March 13, 2024

The Honorable Robert E. Craven
Chairman, House Committee on Judiciary
House Lounge, Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

RE: 2024-H 7217 – An Act Relating To Criminal Offenses -- Assault Weapons
2024-H 7373 – An Act Relating to Criminal Offenses - Weapons

Dear Chairman Craven:

I write in strong support of H 7217, a crucial piece of gun safety legislation that would ban the sale of assault weapons in Rhode Island, and H 7373, a bill that requires safe storage of firearms and provides penalties for violations.

When this committee heard these bills last year, five people had just been tragically killed with many others injured at the hands of a gunman with an AR-15 style weapon in Louisville, Kentucky. Since then, there have been countless tragic incidents of gun violence in our country that could have been prevented with common-sense gun safety legislation like the measures proposed in H 7217 and H 7373. Because Congress has failed to renew the Federal Assault Weapons Ban, which was in place for a decade, states must take action to keep their communities safe.

Rhode Island's proposed assault weapons ban presents a balanced approach to gun safety, prohibiting any future purchases or transfers of assault weapons while also grandfathering in previously obtained assault weapons, provided that the rifles are registered with the appropriate police department. This registration process acts as a second safety check, requiring current owners of assault weapons to undergo a fingerprint-supported criminal background check.

Furthermore, H 7373 requires safe firearm storage, an essential component of preventing deaths due to gun violence. By ensuring that firearms are securely stored away from unauthorized access, Rhode Island can significantly reduce the risk of accidents, suicides, and acts of violence.

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Safe storage measures are essential to promote responsible gun ownership and keep our loved ones safe.

When it comes to addressing gun violence, the State needs more than thoughts and prayers. The time to act is now.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my support for these two important pieces of legislation. I appreciate the General Assembly's continued partnership, and I urge the Committee to recommend passage of an assault weapons ban as well as to strengthen safe storage requirements here in Rhode Island.

Sincerely,



Daniel J. McKee
Governor

CC: The Honorable Members of the House Committee on Judiciary
The Honorable Jason Knight
The Honorable Justine Caldwell
Nicole McCarty Esq., Chief Legal Counsel to the Speaker of the House