

Roberta DiMezza

From: Siegel, Deborah H. <dsiegel@ric.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, March 5, 2024 1:47 PM
To: House Judiciary Committee; Rep. Craven, Robert E.; Rep. McEntee, Carol Hagan; Rep. Knight, Jason; Rep. Ajello, Edith H.; Rep. Batista, Jose F.; Rep. Bennett, David A.; Rep. Caldwell, Justine A.; Rep. Casimiro, Julie A.; Rep. Corvese, Arthur J.; Rep. Cruz, Cherie L.; Rep. Dawson, Matthew S.; Rep. Felix, Leonela; Rep. Noret, Thomas E.; Rep. Place, David J.; Rep. Roberts, Sherry; Roberta DiMezza; 222-2258; HouseJudiciary@rilegislature.gov
Subject: In Support of H 7217: Assault Weapons Ban

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

Dear House Judiciary Chairperson Craven and Members of the Committee:

We have a public health crisis on our hands. You can help. Support H 7217, the Assault Weapons Ban.

The headline in the *Providence Journal* on Saturday, December 9, 2023 shouted, "US mass killings in 2023 near record." Assault weapons kill fast and furiously, the weapons of choice in US mass murders.

I am Deborah Siegel, a resident of Pawtucket; Jennifer Stewart is my State Representative. I write to you as Professor Emerita in the School of Social Work at Rhode Island College, where for four decades I've taught the crucial importance of using research evidence to inform social policy. I am also a clinical social worker who does psychotherapy with people who have been traumatized by gun violence. I am a mom whose children are now afraid of being in the wrong place at the wrong time when they go to school, a mall, supermarket, Walmart, concert, house of worship, drive a car or walk down the street.

I do not challenge the Second Amendment. I simply promote sane, rational gun safety. Today's assault weapons were inconceivable when the Constitution was written. Muskets at that time were clunky tools that slowly shot out one bullet at a time. Today's assault weapons tear flesh apart, spitting out multiple bullets at high speed, each whirling in a spiral designed immediately to pulverize and dissolve the victim's internal organs. Assault weapons were created for the Vietnam War for one reason, to kill as many enemy combatants as quickly and efficiently as possible. They have no place in civilian life.

Hence, I support the Assault Weapons Ban. This bill grandfathers in assault weapons currently owned, but makes it a felony to buy another assault weapon or transfer one's assault weapon to another person. While the ban does not take currently owned assault weapons out of their current owners' hands. the bill is, however, an important step towards limiting the gross proliferation of these weapons which today are used in mass murder after mass murder in the U.S.

People want guns so they can protect themselves because they understandably feel unsafe. The great irony and paradox is that the proliferation of guns profoundly reduces public safety. We now have more guns than people in the U.S. In 2023 there were more mass shootings than days in the year. We are caught in an endless self-perpetuating cycle of gun violence, fear, more guns, more violence, more fear. The insanity must stop.

You have the power to help. You can stand up to the gun lobby and gun manufacturers. Lives are in your hands. The overwhelming majority of Rhode Islanders want you to do the right thing.

Sincerely,

Deborah H. Siegel, Ph.D., LICSW, DCSW, ACSW

Professor Emerita of Social Work

School of Social Work

Rhode Island College

Providence, Rhode Island 02908

cell: 401-474-4294

Dsiegel@ric.edu

Deborah H. Siegel, Ph.D., LICSW, DCSW, ACSW
Professor Emerita of Social Work
School of Social Work

Guardo Hall
Rhode Island College
600 Mount Pleasant Avenue
Providence, Rhode Island 02908

Please note: E-mail communications cannot be assumed to be confidential.