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From: Kristen Chambers <krischambers1@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 4, 2024 9:35 PM
To: House Judiciary Committee
Cc: Rep. Cotter, Megan L.
Subject: Support House Bill 7217

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Honorable Chair Craven and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

I strongly support Representative Knight's bill **H 7217** (An Act Relating to Criminal Offenses- Assault Weapons).

Assault weapons are exceptionally deadly firearms commonplace in mass shootings. Between 2009 and 2020, when assault weapons were used in a mass shooting, 6 times as many people were shot, twice as many people were killed, and 22 times as many people were wounded per incident on average, compared to mass shootings where assault weapons were not used. Rounds fired from an assault weapon inflict greater damage to the human body than rounds from a typical handgun, and these guns can fire multiple high-powered rounds extremely fast. Assault weapons do not belong in the hands of civilians.

Restricting assault weapons is a common-sense public safety measure given the unconscionable devastation these weapons wreak on our society. H7217 would protect Rhode Islanders by reducing the likelihood of mass shooting injuries and deaths by assault weapons. Researchers estimate that if the federal law prohibiting assault weapons was in effect from 2005 through 2019, it would have prevented 30 mass shootings that resulted in 1,478 people shot and killed or wounded. Ten other states, including Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New York have passed legislation prohibiting assault weapons.

Nationally and in Rhode Island, the proliferation of the number of semiautomatic assault weapons in our country is a public health and safety issue that should be addressed on both a federal and state level. It is the Legislature's duty to strengthen laws to ensure the safety of Rhode Islanders.

I urge you to vote this bill out of committee and send it to the House Floor with a recommendation to pass H 7217.

Sincerely,

Kristen P. Chambers

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