

March 12, 2024

Chairperson Robert E. Craven
House Committee on Judiciary
82 Smith St.
Rhode Island State House, Room 101

Subject: Support House Bill 7217 (AN ACT RELATING TO CRIMINAL OFFENSES - ASSAULT WEAPONS)

Honorable Chair Craven and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

I am writing to you to show my strong support for 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.

I believe that 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 via assault weapons. Ten other states, including Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New York have passed legislation prohibiting assault weapons.

Nationally and in Rhode Island, I believe that 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. I stand by all House bills that 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.

Thank you on behalf of the people of Rhode Island by codifying into law common sense gun laws.

Sincerely,

Patricia A Cole

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