



Mayor of Providence

Brett P. Smiley

March 13, 2024

The Honorable Robert Craven
House Judiciary Committee
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Chairman Craven and Honorable Members of the Committee:

I write this letter in strong support of House Bill 7217 relating to criminal offenses — assault weapons. This legislation, if passed, would ban the possession, sale, and transfer of assault weapons.

In communities across the United States, cities and towns have been torn apart by the mass destruction caused by assault weapons. These weapons of war do not belong in the City of Providence and are an ongoing threat to the health and safety of all of our residents. As Mayor, I urge passage of this legislation in an effort to prevent Providence— and all communities throughout our state— from experiencing a similar tragedy.

With more than 650 mass shooting taking place in 2023, the United States' gun violence epidemic is a public health crisis that demands a robust response from lawmakers everywhere. While Providence Police were able to successfully seize 312 guns last year, including 11 assault rifles, further action is needed to help protect our community and the law enforcement officers who serve it.

Public safety is a top priority for my administration and passing this legislation would bring Rhode Island in line with Massachusetts, Connecticut, and eight other states in taking necessary action to remove these weapons from our streets— protecting our schools and improving the quality of life in our neighborhoods.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to vote yes of this critical piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Brett P. Smiley

Mayor