

Diana Garlington
78 Burns Street
Providence, RI 02904
March 25, 2025

RE: Support of House Bill 5436

Dear Chairman Craven and members of the Judiciary Committee:

My name is Diana Garlington, I live in Providence and my Representative is Anthony Desimone. I am also a member of RI Coalition Against Gun Violence. I am here today to speak from the depths of my heart in support of an assault weapons ban. In 2011, I lost my beloved daughter, Esscence Christal, to a senseless act of violence. The pain of losing her is a burden I carry every single day of my life. She was full of potential, full of dreams, and yet her life was taken far too soon by the destructive power of an assault weapon.

As a parent who has experienced unimaginable loss, I can no longer stand by in silence while these weapons of war continue to take lives in our communities. The weapon that took many of the youth's lives in our community is designed for one purpose: mass destruction. It is not a weapon meant for self-defense, hunting, or protecting homes—it is designed to kill as many people as quickly as possible. And that is exactly what it did.

Every time there is a new tragedy, every time I hear of another life taken by weapons of war, my heart breaks all over again. But this pain can no longer be ignored. We are all responsible for each other's safety. Every day we wait, we allow more families to experience the devastation I have gone through. Nearly 47,000 people died of gun-related injuries in the United States in 2023, according to the latest available statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 2023). Gun-related injuries in the United States: 2023 statistics.

I am asking for your support in passing legislation that bans the sale, possession, and use of assault weapons. These weapons are not needed in civilian life. No one needs them for self-defense, and no one should be able to use them to take lives. By passing an assault weapons ban, we can protect our children, our families, and our communities from further devastation.

This is not just a political issue. It is a moral issue. It is a matter of protecting human lives—lives like my daughter's. I stand here today, not just as a grieving parent, but as someone who believes we can do better. We must do better.

Please consider the lives that have already been lost and the many more that can be saved by taking action. I urge you to support an assault weapon ban and take meaningful steps to end the violence that continues to tear apart families like mine.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Diana Garlington
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