

RE: Support of House Bill H5436 – 03/26/2025

Dear Chairman and Members of the Judiciary Committee:

My name is Jacqueline Wilk. I live in Narragansett and my representative is Rep. McEntee. I'm here tonight in support of Rep. Knight's assault weapons regulation bill H5436.

I speak to you as a retired psychologist who worked in public schools for almost 30 years. The last 20 of them unfortunately having to include a significant focus on school safety and "hardening the soft targets" known as schools.

What started as making sure doors were closed and locked, grew to include cameras and intercoms at every door, veiled intercom messages to alert staff of danger in the building, and the resulting drills or real protocols put in place. Corraling children into corners away from doors and windows, lights out, shades drawn, quiet, don't move.

Why does this have to happen? What is our responsibility to protect all of our children and grandchildren from violence, from abuse, from emotional neglect and harm?

For three straight years the number one cause of death in US children and teens, 1-17 is gun violence! Not accidents, Not cancer, Guns!!

It is our duty as the adults in the room to show some humanity and courage to do the right thing and ban assault weapons for ordinary use. Just think about Newtown CT – picture yourselves trying to find and/or identify your 5 or 6 year old child in that carnage and horror that day. Some of the 20 children were unrecognizable.

An assault weapon was used that day. Assault weapons were also used in 44 mass shootings between 1981 and 2017 accounting for 85.6 % of the 501 deaths. During the assault weapons ban from 1994 to 2004 mass shooting fatalities dropped by 70%. It works.

Please protect the innocent! Do the right thing. Support H5436.

Thank you.

