



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND
OFFICE OF GOVERNOR DANIEL J. MCKEE

March 26, 2025

The Honorable Robert E. Craven
Chairman, House Committee on Judiciary
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

RE: 2025-H 5436 – An Act Relating to Criminal Offenses – Rhode Island Assault Weapons Ban of 2025

Dear Chairman Craven:

Please accept this letter in strong support of H 5436, a crucial piece of gun safety legislation identical to the proposal in my recommended budget ([GBA #3](#)) that would ban the sale of assault weapons in Rhode Island. I would like to thank Representative Knight for submitting this bill and for his steadfast leadership and commitment to banning assault weapons in Rhode Island.

Rhode Island’s proposed assault weapons ban presents a balanced approach to gun safety, prohibiting any future purchases or transfers of assault weapons while grandfathering currently lawfully possessed assault weapons, provided that the weapons are registered with the local police department. To address the prevalent misinformation about what this bill does (and does not do), firearms that are not semi-automatic are not impacted by H 5436. Further, the ban does not apply to all semi-automatic weapons; many firearms—whether for home defense, hunting, or sport—will not be impacted by this ban. This legislation applies to certain semi-automatic shotguns, rifles, and pistols that have specific features and is loosely modeled on the former federal assault weapons ban. This “features test” exists in most of the ten states with an assault weapons ban and has withstood multiple legal challenges.

Gun violence remains a public health issue across the country and in Rhode Island. Ten states, including Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New York, have enacted assault weapons bans. The time has come for Rhode Island to become the eleventh state to ban assault-style firearms. We must learn from Parkland High School; Aurora, Colorado movie theatre; Pulse Nightclub; the Tree of Life Synagogue; the San Bernadino Holiday Party; Sutherland Springs Church; and

Chairman Craven
March 26, 2025
Page 2

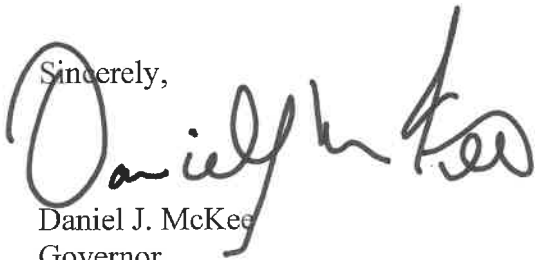
Sandy Hook Elementary School. Over 150 adults and children were killed and over 180 people were wounded in these mass shootings.

Representative Knight, Chair DiPalma, and I announced this assault weapons ban legislation during the February press conference where Mia Tretta, a current Brown University student and survivor of a high school shooting stated, "Assault weapons are often the weapon of choice for mass and school shooters because they are designed to kill as many people as possible in a short period of time." Let's join our neighboring states and stop the sale and transfer of these deadly weapons and help make our communities safer.

When it comes to addressing gun violence, the time for action is now. Today is the day that state leaders should act to protect our children, students, teachers, concert attendees, religious congregants, movie goers, first responders, and every resident of this great state.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my support for this important piece of legislation. I urge this Honorable Committee to act swiftly to recommend passage of H 5436 and bring this bill to a vote on the House floor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Daniel J. McKee". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "D".

Daniel J. McKee
Governor

CC: The Honorable Members of the House Committee on Judiciary
The Honorable Jason Knight
Nicole McCarty Esq., Chief Legal Counsel to the Speaker of the House