

March 25, 2025

Dear Chairman Craven and Honorable members of the House Judiciary Committee,

My name is Lisa Peterson, and I am writing in strong support of H5443, which would create a voluntary "Do Not Sell" firearms list in the state of Rhode Island. This bill is a compassionate, commonsense approach to suicide prevention and personal agency in mental health.

For the past 28 years, I have worked in the field of behavioral health, providing integrated mental health and substance use treatment in a variety of clinical settings. I have seen firsthand how moments of crisis can lead to tragic, irreversible outcomes—especially when access to lethal means is readily available. Suicide is often an impulsive act, and when firearms are involved, the chance of survival is minimal. Easy access to guns removes the precious minutes—or even seconds—needed for intervention, reflection, and life-saving support.

H5443 would give individuals the opportunity to protect themselves during vulnerable times by voluntarily suspending their ability to purchase a firearm. This is an empowering tool for people who are self-aware and proactive in managing their mental health. It is not a restriction, but rather a personal safeguard, and it has the potential to save lives without infringing on anyone's rights.

I urge you to support H5443 and help Rhode Island lead the way in offering thoughtful, evidence-based solutions to reduce suicide and promote mental wellness.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'Lisa Peterson', with a stylized, cursive script.

Lisa Peterson, LMHC/LCDP/LCDS/MAC