



RHODE ISLAND POLICE CHIEFSASSOCIATION

H 5651: SUPPORT

The Honorable Robert Craven, Sr.
Chairman, House Judiciary Committee
Rhode Island General Assembly
82 Smith Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903
HouseJudiciary@rilegislature.gov

Dear Chairman Craven and Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

I am writing today as the Chief of Police for the Town of South Kingstown and as a member of the Executive Board of the Rhode Island Police Chiefs Association to express strong support for H. 5651.

This legislation would responsibly amend Rhode Island law to allow limited access to specific juvenile records for the purpose of conducting firearm background checks under the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS), in accordance with the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (BSCA).

Under the BSCA, states are required to make available juvenile adjudications or mental health commitments that would qualify as disqualifying events under 18 U.S.C. § 922(g) if committed by an adult. These include:

- Felony-equivalent adjudications
- Fugitives from justice
- Documented unlawful drug use or addiction
- Mental health adjudications or commitments
- Restraining orders related to intimate partner violence
- Misdemeanor crimes of domestic violence

H. 5651 ensures that Rhode Island can meet this federal standard while still preserving the confidentiality of juvenile records unrelated to firearm eligibility. The bill is narrowly tailored—only serious adjudications or commitments relevant to public safety and firearm disqualifiers are shared, and such records are automatically sealed upon the individual reaching the age of 21.

This approach strikes the right balance. It equips law enforcement with the critical information needed to make informed decisions about firearm eligibility for individuals under 21, while respecting the rehabilitative intent of the juvenile justice system. Rhode Island's current laws present a gap in compliance, which this legislation thoughtfully addresses.

H. 5651 strengthens public safety, aligns Rhode Island with federal requirements, and upholds the integrity of both juvenile justice and responsible gun ownership. I urge the Committee to support this important legislation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Matthew C. Moynihan".

Matthew C. Moynihan
Chief of Police, South Kingstown Police Department
Executive Board Member, Rhode Island Police Chiefs Association