

Chairperson Craven and Members of House Judiciary Committee,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to House Bill 5654, which would eliminate the ability for individuals who possess a valid concealed carry permit (CCW) from any state to apply for a concealed carry permit in any city or town in Rhode Island.

As it stands, applicants are still required to comply with Rhode Island's procedures under state law and follow all city/town-specific instructions, including background checks, fingerprinting, and other requirements. This ensures that the process is thorough and maintains public safety. However, the proposed bill would unnecessarily restrict the ability of lawful gun owners to apply through their local city or town authority, forcing them to go through the Attorney General's office, which uses a "may issue" standard.

Currently, cities and towns in Rhode Island operate under a "shall issue" system, which provides a more straightforward and constitutionally protected process. Removing the ability to apply to a local government entity and instead forcing applicants to the AG's office could infringe on the constitutional right to bear arms, as protected under the Second Amendment. This restriction could also be in conflict with the Supreme Court's Bruen decision, which emphasized that permitting processes must not violate citizens' rights and noted that Rhode Island's current system is constitutionally sound due to its "shall issue" status at the local level (see SCOTUS opinion: [Bruen Decision](#)).

I urge you not to allow this bill to advance to the House floor for a vote. It poses a threat to the rights of law-abiding citizens in Rhode Island and could set a dangerous precedent for future attempts to restrict constitutional rights.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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