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From: Chris Morin <cmorin543@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 24, 2025 9:54 AM
To: House Judiciary Committee
Subject: Opposition to House Bill 5654

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House Committee on Judiciary
Rhode Island General Assembly
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Subject: Opposition to House Bill 5654 – Restrictions on Concealed Carry Permits for Out-of-State Residents

Dear Members of the House Committee on Judiciary,

I am writing to respectfully urge you to oppose House Bill 5654, a measure that would prohibit local licensing authorities in Rhode Island from issuing concealed carry permits to out-of-state residents based upon permits issued by other states.

As a lifelong Rhode Islander and an advocate for responsible firearm ownership, I believe strongly in the rights protected by the Second Amendment and Article I, Section 22 of the Rhode Island Constitution. These rights are fundamental and should be safeguarded not only for residents of Rhode Island but also for law-abiding visitors who contribute positively to our communities and economy.

HB 5654 would undermine the principle of interstate reciprocity and mutual respect that is foundational to many aspects of American life and law. Concealed carry permit holders nationwide undergo rigorous background checks, safety training, and assessments of their character and competence before receiving their licenses. According to data from multiple law enforcement agencies and the Crime Prevention Research Center, concealed carry permit holders are consistently among the most law-abiding demographics nationwide. They commit crimes at significantly lower rates than the general population, making them precisely the individuals who pose the least risk to public safety.

By refusing to honor valid permits issued by other states, Rhode Island risks alienating responsible visitors who travel to our state for work, family, recreation, or tourism. These visitors contribute significantly to our local businesses, hospitality industry, and overall economy. There is no evidence that prohibiting these law-abiding visitors from legally carrying their firearms while in Rhode Island would lead to any measurable improvement in public safety. Instead, it would unfairly penalize those who choose to visit our state while exercising a fundamental constitutional right.

Further, this proposed legislation may encourage reciprocal actions from other states, potentially jeopardizing the rights of Rhode Islanders when traveling beyond our borders. Reciprocity between states creates mutual trust, respect, and cooperation—principles essential for the unity and smooth functioning of our nation.

Rhode Island should continue to respect the lawful concealed carry permits issued by other states, recognizing the rigorous vetting processes already in place nationwide. Rather than implementing unnecessary and restrictive measures, our focus should remain on policies proven to enhance public safety, such as supporting community violence prevention programs, enforcing existing laws, and improving mental health services.

In closing, I urge you to stand firmly for fairness, respect, and constitutional freedoms by voting NO on HB 5654. Please help maintain Rhode Island's reputation as a welcoming state that respects responsible firearm owners, regardless of their state of residence.

Thank you very much for your thoughtful consideration of this important matter.

Respectfully and sincerely yours,

Christopher Morin

Coventry, Rhode Island