



RHODE ISLAND POLICE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION

H 5889: 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 my support for H. 5889.

This legislation would amend §12-1.3-4 of the General Laws to clarify that expunged criminal records may still be considered by law enforcement when evaluating applications for permits to carry a pistol or revolver under §§ 11-47-11 or 11-47-18.

The ability to consider a person's complete history—including prior criminal convictions that may have been expunged—is essential for police chiefs tasked with making public safety determinations. While expungement serves an important rehabilitative purpose in many contexts, concealed carry permit decisions require a higher standard of review, given the direct implications for public and officer safety.

As drafted, H. 5889 provides a thoughtful and balanced approach. It maintains the confidentiality and rehabilitative intent of expungement in civil, employment, and licensing contexts, while appropriately allowing law enforcement access to critical information when evaluating concealed carry permit applications. This ensures that public safety remains the foremost consideration in the permitting process.

Importantly, the bill adds clarity and consistency to the current framework. It removes any uncertainty surrounding a police chief's authority to review expunged records and ensures that departments are not inadvertently restricted from considering relevant information that may bear directly on an applicant's fitness to carry a firearm.

In short, H. 5889 gives law enforcement the tools necessary to make informed, responsible decisions about who should be permitted to carry a firearm in public. I respectfully urge the Committee to support this legislation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

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