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From: Keith Ford <kfordric@gmail.com>
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Subject: H5436A- Opposed

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June 1, 2025

The Honorable Members of the House Judiciary Committee Rhode Island State House 82 Smith Street Providence, RI 02903

Subject: Opposition to House Bill 5436A - The Rhode Island Assault Weapons Ban Act of 2025

Dear Chair Craven and Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to House Bill 5436A, the proposed "Rhode Island Assault Weapons Ban Act of 2025." While I understand and share the concern for public safety, I believe this legislation is fundamentally flawed, infringes upon the constitutional rights of law-abiding citizens, and will prove ineffective in achieving its stated goals.

First and foremost, this bill seeks to ban firearms based on cosmetic features rather than their functional capabilities, mislabeling commonly owned semi-automatic rifles, pistols, and shotguns as "assault weapons." These firearms are widely used by responsible citizens for self-defense, hunting, sport shooting, and competitive purposes. The term "assault weapon" is a political construct, not a legal or military definition, designed to evoke fear and misrepresent the nature of these firearms. Banning such weapons would disarm law-abiding citizens and deprive them of effective tools for personal protection, especially in situations where they may face multiple threats.

Furthermore, House Bill 5436A directly undermines the Second Amendment to the United States Constitution, which protects the right of individuals to keep and bear arms. The Supreme Court's decisions in *District of Columbia v. Heller* and *McDonald v. City of Chicago* affirm that this right extends to common firearms suitable for self-defense. The firearms targeted by this bill are indeed in common use, making their prohibition a direct affront to this fundamental right.

The effectiveness of such bans in reducing crime and enhancing public safety has been widely debated and, in many cases, shown to be negligible. Criminals, by definition, do not abide by laws. They will continue to acquire firearms through illicit means, making these bans only burdensome for law-abiding citizens. Resources would be better spent on addressing the root causes of violence, improving mental health services, enhancing law enforcement capabilities, and vigorously prosecuting those who misuse firearms.

I urge the committee to consider the unintended consequences of this legislation. It will not deter violent criminals, but it will punish responsible gun owners and make them less safe. Instead, I advocate for policies that focus on enforcing existing laws, prosecuting violent offenders, addressing mental health issues, and promoting responsible firearm ownership education and safety.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my concerns. I respectfully request that you vote against House Bill 5436A and instead pursue measures that genuinely enhance public safety without infringing on the constitutional rights of Rhode Islanders.

Sincerely,

Keith Ford
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