

Roberta DiMezza

From: Jonathan N <toydrone@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, June 2, 2025 12:45 PM
To: House Judiciary Committee; Rep. Caldwell, Justine A.; Rep. Blazejewski, Christopher R.; Rep. Shekarchi, K Joseph; Rep. Chippendale, Michael W.
Subject: Fwd: Against house bills 5436, 5443, 5651, 5652, 5654

Good Afternoon House Judiciary,

I am writing to re-state my opposition to house bills **5436, 5443, 5651, 5652, 5654 with emphasis against 5436.**

I encourage you to oppose this legislation because it does nothing to solve actual problems. 54% of gun violence are suicides and 80% of gun crime occurs in underserved communities which these bills do not solve. 5436 is far more over-reaching than “common sense” gun legislation as it bans common museum interest antiques and hunting shotguns. Only 0.01175% of all guns in the United States will ever be involved in a fatal accident, suicide or homicide. But 14.0% of gun owners are voters.

Thank you,
Jonathan Newkirk
East Greenwich

Begin forwarded message:

From: Jonathan N <toydrone@gmail.com>
Subject: Against house bills 5436, 5443, 5651, 5652, 5654
Date: March 25, 2025 at 11:57:40 AM EDT
To: HouseJudiciary@rilegislature.gov

My name is Jonathan Newkirk. I’m a native Rhode Islander, a resident of East Greenwich, father of 2, hunter and sportsman club member.

I am against house bills 5436, 5443, 5651, 5652, 5654.

According to congress.gov, data collection practices regarding active shooter events varies widely among independent groups. For example, the non-profit group *The Gun Violence Archive* (GVA) claims a number for mass-shootings 49 times greater than the FBI within the same time period. [2021–2023 FBI/40, GVA/1,965.] (*How to define mass shootings*, 2025). To keep my statistics honest, I will rely mainly on CDC and FBI crime data numbers.

“Firearm injury”, as defined by CDC and FBI, includes suicides, accidents and homicides. Interesting fact, according to the CDC, Rhode Island’s firearm injury rate has been one of the lowest in the country for the past 10 years. In 2022, Rhode Island’s Firearm Injury Rate was 5x below the national average and the lowest in the country (3.1 people per 100,000). This means other states may benefit from more gun laws, but statistically, Rhode Island is consistently safer than every other state, including those *with* assault weapon bans.

Our children are 10x more likely to die from a fentanyl overdose than die from a gun. 64% of RI firearms injuries are suicides. 36% are accidents and homicides. 80% of RI homicides take place

in Providence County (John Hopkins, 2022 data). Suicide prevention and focus on our vulnerable communities is where RI should be leading its efforts, not more gun laws.

A *Mayors Against Illegal Guns* report indicates that mass shootings compose less than 1% of gun murders recorded by the FBI. The survey also found that 75% of incidents classified as mass-shootings *did not involve firearms considered to be "assault weapons."* The report also stated, domestic or family violence was a factor closely connected to 57% of all cases.

The bills that are being proposed today are far-reaching and would classify 90 year old antiques with museum interest as assault weapons (M1 Garand invented in 1936 and served in WW2). Collectibles such as the M1 Garand which the ATF itself classifies separately as historically significant and is widely used in national programs like Civilian Marksmanship competitions Rhode Island would classify as an assault weapon. A Ruger 10/22 which is one of the most popular recreational firearms since 1964 would be classified as an assault weapon for the mere addition of a competition barrel with threaded end.

I urge you to reconsider these bills, especially HB5436 as they lack statistical merit and impose undue burden on law-abiding sportsmen and women. We don't need more firearm laws. Rhode Island is already firearm safe.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2024, October 3). *Rhode Island*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/states/rhodeisland/ri.htm>

How many people die from gun-related injuries in Rhode Island each year? USAFacts. (2025, March 11). <https://usafacts.org/answers/how-many-people-die-from-gun-related-injuries-in-the-us-each-month/state/rhode-island/>

How to define mass shootings: Potential policy implications. congress.gov. (2024, November 19). <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R48276>

State Data: Rhode Island. Center for Gun Violence Solutions. (n.d.). <https://publichealth.jhu.edu/center-for-gun-violence-solutions/rhode-island#:~:text=Providence%20County%20had%20the%20highest,in%20Washington%20County%20in%202022.>