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Date: January 29, 2026

Re: RI HB 7211 - An Act Relating to State Affairs and Government - The Rhode Island Community Protection Act

Position: SUPPORT

To: The Rhode Island House Judiciary Committee

Distinguished Members of the Committee,

As an organization of law enforcement professionals, Law Enforcement Action Partnership (LEAP) writes in support of H7211. This legislation would establish clear standards governing the use of face coverings by law enforcement officers during public interactions, while preserving necessary exceptions for officer safety and operational needs.

LEAP is an international nonprofit group of police, prosecutors, judges, and other criminal justice professionals who speak from firsthand experience serving in the justice system. Our mission is to make communities safer by focusing law enforcement resources on the greatest threats to public safety, addressing the root causes of crime, and working toward healing police-community relations.

From a law enforcement perspective, officer safety and public trust are not competing values. They are mutually reinforcing. Clear standards around identification and face coverings during public interactions reduce confusion, prevent impersonation, and support safer encounters for both officers and community members. When people understand who they are interacting with, encounters are less likely to escalate and cooperation is more likely to occur.

H7211 recognizes the real and serious safety concerns officers face in high-risk situations. The bill preserves appropriate exceptions for circumstances where face coverings are necessary, including tactical operations, undercover work, emergency

LawEnforcementActionPartnership.org

Formerly known as Law Enforcement Against Prohibition

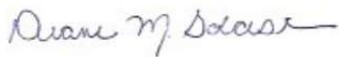
response, and situations involving hazardous conditions. These carve-outs reflect an understanding of operational realities and ensure that officer safety is not compromised when protective equipment is essential.

Accountability and transparency play an important role in protecting law enforcement professionals as well. Clear identification standards show the public that law enforcement has nothing to hide. They help safeguard officers from false allegations, strengthen public confidence in lawful policing, and reduce legal and professional risk for departments and individuals alike. By setting consistent expectations, H7211 supports officers who act within the bounds of the law and professional standards.

In our experience, community trust is a critical component of effective public safety. Trust affects whether people report crimes, comply with lawful orders, and cooperate during investigations. Policies that reinforce transparency during interactions help maintain that trust, which in turn contributes to safer conditions for officers and the communities they serve.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our perspective in support of H7211. We appreciate the committee's consideration of this legislation.

Respectfully,



Lt. Diane Goldstein (Ret.)
Redondo Beach Police Department
Executive Director, The Law Enforcement Action Partnership