

## Ariana Costa

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**From:** Jonathan Newkirk <noreply@not-the-end.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, April 3, 2026 5:42 PM  
**To:** Rep. O'Brien, William W.; Rep. McEntee, Carol Hagan; Rep. Dawson, Matthew S.; Rep. Thomas Noret; Rep. Roberts, Sherry; Rep. Nathan Biah; Rep. Earl Read; Rep. Corvese, Arthur J.; Rep. Diaz, Grace; Rep. Hull, Raymond A.; Rep. Justine Caldwell; Sen. Bridget Valverde; House Judiciary Committee  
**Subject:** Constituent Letter Re: RI 2026 Bill H7128 — Armed Campus Police Mandate

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Completed

Dear Rep. Justine Caldwell and Sen. Bridget Valverde,

As a constituent and resident of East Greenwich, I am writing to express my strong opposition to RI 2026 H7128, the "Armed Campus Police Mandate" bill. I firmly believe that this bill would be a misguided step for our state's public higher educational institutions, and I urge you to vote against it.

My opposition to H7128 is rooted in several concerns that I believe have significant implications for Rhode Island residents. Firstly, introducing more firearms onto college campuses would increase the risk of accidents and unintended consequences, particularly in environments where students may be experiencing mental health crises or substance abuse issues. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, one in four college students struggle with mental health issues, and the presence of armed police could escalate situations that require a more nuanced and supportive approach.

Additionally, mandating armed campus police would divert resources away from more pressing priorities, such as academic support services, counseling, and community engagement programs. Our public higher educational institutions should focus on providing high-quality education and fostering a supportive learning environment, rather than militarizing their campuses. In East Greenwich, I have seen firsthand the positive impact that community-based initiatives and partnerships can have on our local schools and students. I believe that we should be investing in similar initiatives at the college level, rather than prioritizing armed policing.

Another reason I oppose H7128 is that it could have a chilling effect on campus free speech and activism. The presence of armed police can be intimidating, and may discourage students from exercising their right to protest and express themselves. As someone who values the importance of civic engagement and critical thinking, I believe that our colleges and universities should be safe spaces for intellectual exploration and debate, not environments where students feel policed and surveilled.

Finally, I am concerned about the potential impact of H7128 on students of color and other marginalized groups, who may already feel vulnerable or targeted on campus. Introducing armed police could exacerbate these feelings and create a culture of mistrust and tension. As a community, we should be working to build bridges and foster inclusivity, not perpetuating systems that perpetuate inequality.

In light of these concerns, I respectfully urge you to vote against H7128. I believe that our state's public higher educational institutions should prioritize the safety, well-being, and academic success of their students, rather than introducing more firearms onto campus. Thank you for your time and service, and I look forward to hearing your thoughts on this matter.

With appreciation for your public service, Jonathan Newkirk East Greenwich, RI