



RHODE ISLAND POLICE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION

March 24, 2026

The Honorable Carol Hagan McEntee
Chairwoman, House Committee on Judiciary
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

HouseJudiciary@rilegislature.gov

SUPPORT H 7550

Dear Chairwoman McEntee and Honorable Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Rhode Island Police Chiefs Association, I write in support of H 7550, legislation that addresses unlawful interference with traffic and strengthens public safety on our roadways.

This bill provides important clarity and authority for law enforcement to address situations where individuals intentionally obstruct highways and interfere with the safe and lawful movement of traffic. As outlined in the legislation, such conduct can create dangerous conditions for motorists and, critically, can delay emergency response vehicles when seconds matter most.

Across Rhode Island and the country, we have seen instances where roadways—particularly major highways—are intentionally blocked, placing both the individuals involved and the traveling public at significant risk. These incidents create unpredictable and often hazardous conditions, increasing the likelihood of crashes, impeding access for first responders, and diverting law enforcement resources from other critical public safety needs.

H 7550 establishes clear consequences for this conduct, including enhanced penalties when interference results in serious harm or death. This framework appropriately recognizes the severity of these actions, particularly when they obstruct emergency vehicles and endanger lives.

Importantly, the bill preserves protections for lawful demonstrations, ensuring that constitutionally protected activity is not impacted while still addressing dangerous and unlawful behavior that threatens public safety.

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The Rhode Island Police Chiefs Association supports this legislation because it provides law enforcement with a necessary and balanced tool to protect the public, maintain the safe flow of traffic, and ensure that emergency services can operate without obstruction.

Thank you for your consideration of this important public safety measure. I would be happy to answer any questions or provide additional information.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "S. Wordell", is centered on a light blue rectangular background.

Chief Sidney Wordell (ret.)
Executive Director
Rhode Island Police Chiefs Association