

Jacob Silva

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Good afternoon/evening, Chair McEntee, Vice Chair Knight, Vice Chair Dawson and members of the Rhode Island House Judiciary Committee.

My name is Jacob Silva, and I am here as a Coventry resident to strongly oppose the majority of the package of gun bills being considered, specifically H8075, H8073, and H7035.

I want to be clear – everyone in this room cares about safety. We all want fewer tragedies, less violent crime, and safer communities. But the proposals before you today do not move us toward that goal. Instead, they place heavy burdens on law-abiding citizens while doing nothing to address the root causes of violence.

Take H7035, which would limit residents to purchase one firearm per month. Criminals are not walking into licensed dealers and spacing out their purchases to follow state law. This measure only impacts law-abiding citizens – sportsmen, collectors, and individuals seeking to exercise their constitutional rights to protect their homes.

H8073 goes even further by criminalizing the possession of commonly owned firearms, with no grandfathering. That means people who legally purchased property, in compliance with the law at the time, would suddenly face felony charges. That is not policy, it's punishment. And it undermines the trust between citizens and our government at a time when trust for this government is already at a historic low.

And 8075, requiring a one-million-dollar insurance policy, effectively puts a price tag on a constitutional right. Rights should not depend on your income. This disproportionately harms

working families and creates an additional financial burden that makes self-defense something that someone who is not wealthy cannot afford.

It cannot be lost to us that the very purpose of the Second Amendment is to safeguard citizens from a tyrannical government and prevent governmental overreach – the very overreach that is occurring today. The legislation before us today puts additional restrictions on our right to bear arms, rights that come from God, not government.

The common thread here is clear: these bills target every day, law-abiding citizens, not criminals.

If we are serious about reducing violence, we need to focus on what actually works, and I come here today to provide a counter solution that would be far more effective than the proposed legislation. That means investing in mental health services, especially early intervention for young people. It means improving access to counseling, crisis response, and community-based support systems. It means addressing the real drivers of violence – despair, isolation, and untreated mental illness.

We should strengthen communities, not divide them, or penalize responsible citizens.

I urge this committee to reject these unjust and egregious proposals, and instead propose real, meaningful solutions that are effective, balanced, and do not infringe Rhode Islander's constitutional rights.

Thank you for your time and consideration.