

Sydney Montstream-Quas
Barrington, RI

April 5, 2026

RE: Support of House Bills 7557 and 8073

Dear Chairwoman McEntee and Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

I am writing to you in support of Representative Donovan's "The Rhode Island Firearm Industry Accountability Act" – H7557 – and Representative Tanzi's "Unlawful Possession of Firearms Act" – H8073. I am a constituent of Rep. Boylan and a founding Board Member of Rhode Island Coalition Against Gun Violence, where we address gun violence as an urgent public health issue.

H7557, The RI Firearm Industry Accountability Act, is important because currently, federal law provides sweeping immunity to the gun industry from most types of civil lawsuits – exempting highly profitable corporations from most normal mechanisms of accountability in court. No other industry in the United States enjoys this kind of protection. H7557 establishes a firearm industry standard of responsible business conduct. It also establishes a cause of action to ensure victims of gun violence can seek fair justice in court if they can prove they suffered actual harm because of a gun industry member's irresponsible conduct.

H8073, the Unlawful Possession of Firearms Act, is important because it will strengthen the Unlawful Sale of Prohibited Firearms Act passed last year. That law made RI the 11th state in the nation to restrict certain military-style weapons - including assault-style rifles like the AR-15. However, it does not cover some assault-style pistols and shotguns and, critically, does not ban possession—making it difficult to enforce, leaving dangerous weapons in circulation, and falling short of our neighboring states' standards. While prohibiting the sale and purchase is a step toward reducing access, it does not go far enough.

Banning possession of military-style weapons is important because:

- The number of mass shootings in the US is escalating daily. In Rhode Island, we have experienced the pain of two recent mass shootings, and need to protect Rhode Islanders from additional carnage and trauma caused by mass shootings.
- **Today is the 93rd day of the year, and there have been 96 mass shootings,** according to the Gun Violence Archive. Banning the possession of military-style weapons decreases the likelihood of mass shootings.
- A study of mass shootings found that incidents involving assault weapons resulted in **70 percent more fatalities and 135 percent more injuries** than those involving other firearms, according to Giffords, a gun violence prevention organization.

I applaud all of the sponsors and co-sponsors of these bills who are champions of gun violence prevention – and ask that you **vote these bills out of committee and to the House floor for a vote.**

Thank you.

Sydney Montstream-Quas
Barrington