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April 8, 2026

The Honorable Carol Hagan McEntee
Chairwoman, House Judiciary Committee
Rhode Island House of Representatives
State House
Providence, RI 02903
HouseJudiciary@rillegislature.gov

Support H. 7647 – access to juvenile records for firearm background checks

Dear Chairwoman McEntee and Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

On behalf of the Rhode Island Police Chiefs Association, I write to express our support for H. 7647.

This legislation makes an important and practical adjustment to current law by allowing access to juvenile records for the limited and specific purpose of conducting firearm background checks. As law enforcement professionals, our members understand the importance of ensuring that background check systems are both accurate and complete, particularly when it comes to preventing firearms from being accessed by individuals who may be prohibited under state or federal law.

H. 7647 appropriately balances privacy considerations with public safety needs. While maintaining the confidentiality protections generally afforded to juvenile records, the bill recognizes that certain information is critical when determining eligibility under federal firearm disqualification criteria. This ensures that background checks conducted through the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) are based on the most complete and relevant information available.

Providing this clarity in statute will strengthen the integrity of the background check process, enhance officer and community safety, and support responsible firearm regulation efforts.

We respectfully urge the Committee to support H. 7647. Thank you for your continued leadership and commitment to public safety in Rhode Island.

Sincerely,

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