

Roberta DiMezza

From: Jonathan Newkirk <noreply@not-the-end.com>
Sent: Saturday, March 14, 2026 8:32 PM
To: Rep. Earl Read; Rep. Chippendale, Michael W.; Rep. Paul Santucci; Rep. Thomas Noret; Rep. Serpa, Patricia A.; Rep. O'Brien, William W.; Rep. Richard Fascia; Rep. Corvese, Arthur J.; Rep. Fellela, Deborah A.; Rep. Justine Caldwell; Sen. Bridget Valverde; House Judiciary Committee
Subject: Constituent Letter Re: RI 2026 Bill H7753 — Felony — Disarming a Peace Officer

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Dear Rep. Justine Caldwell and Sen. Bridget Valverde,

As your constituent and a longtime resident of East Greenwich, I am writing to express my strong support for RI 2026 H7753, which would make disarming a peace officer a felony offense. This legislation addresses a serious public safety concern that affects all Rhode Island families and communities.

First, this bill would provide meaningful protection for the law enforcement officers who risk their lives daily to keep our neighborhoods safe. When officers respond to domestic violence calls in East Greenwich or investigate drug activity in Providence, they face unpredictable and dangerous situations. Their service weapons are often the only thing standing between them and serious harm or death. Making it a felony to disarm an officer sends a clear message that Rhode Island takes these attacks seriously and will impose appropriate consequences.

Second, officer safety directly impacts public safety throughout our state. When criminals know they can disarm officers with minimal consequences, it emboldens more dangerous behavior and puts entire communities at risk. A disarmed officer cannot effectively respond to emergencies or protect innocent bystanders. Last year, I witnessed firsthand how quickly a routine traffic stop near Main Street escalated when someone became aggressive with the responding officer. Situations like these require officers to maintain control of their weapons to protect everyone involved.

Third, this legislation would bring Rhode Island in line with most other states that already treat disarming an officer as a serious felony. Our current laws leave a dangerous gap that criminals can exploit. Families across Rhode Island deserve to know that when they call 911, the officers responding have the strongest possible legal protections to do their jobs effectively.

Finally, making disarming a peace officer a felony would provide prosecutors with the tools they need to seek appropriate sentences for these dangerous crimes. Too often, we see cases where someone attacks an officer and receives only a slap on the wrist. This undermines respect for law enforcement and fails to deter future attacks. Rhode Island families want justice when someone threatens the safety of the officers who protect our communities.

The men and women of law enforcement put themselves in harm's way every day to serve Rhode Island residents. They respond to our emergencies, investigate crimes that affect our families, and work to keep our streets safe. The least we can do is ensure that anyone who tries to disarm them faces serious criminal consequences.

I urge you to vote yes on H7753 when it comes before you. This common-sense legislation will make Rhode Island safer for both our law enforcement officers and the families they serve.

Thank you for your time and service,
Jonathan Newkirk