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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

Re: House Bill 7754 – Concealed Carry Permitting / Non-Resident Applicants

Dear Chairwoman McEntee,

I am writing to express my support for House Bill 7754, which addresses important issues related to the issuance of concealed carry permits by municipal licensing authorities. I would also like to thank the sponsors of this legislation for advancing a proposal that strengthens oversight, accountability, and public safety.

As Chief of Police for the Town of South Kingstown, and as a member of the Executive Board of the Rhode Island Police Chiefs Association, I have seen firsthand the challenges associated with the current statutory framework governing concealed carry permitting under R.I. Gen. Laws § 11-47-11.

Under current law, individuals who reside outside of Rhode Island, but possess a concealed carry permit from another state, may apply for a Rhode Island permit through any municipal police department. This provision, originally enacted in 1959, was intended to support reciprocity at a time when permitting processes across states were rigorous and required substantial in-person background checks.

Today, that landscape has changed significantly. Technology and the internet now allow individuals to obtain concealed carry permits from other states through online application processes, often with limited or inconsistent levels of investigation. Those permits are then presented to Rhode Island municipal police departments in support of local concealed carry applications. This creates a situation where local licensing authorities are expected to assess suitability based on information that may be incomplete, inconsistent, or derived from standards that do not align with Rhode Island's public safety expectations.

This creates both a public safety concern and a significant burden on local resources. Municipal police departments are being asked to vet applicants who have no ties to the community, while lacking access to the local information necessary to make informed suitability determinations.

In South Kingstown, we have experienced this firsthand. We have received concealed carry applications from non-residents with no affiliation to our community. In one instance, applicants submitted out-of-state permits obtained through other jurisdictions, yet when we attempted to contact local authorities in their home jurisdiction to assess suitability, we were unable to obtain

meaningful information. This highlights a fundamental gap in the current system and the challenges faced by local departments in conducting thorough background reviews.

House Bill 7754 addresses these issues in a practical and balanced manner. The legislation would eliminate the provision allowing non-residents with out-of-state permits to apply through municipal police departments and would require Rhode Island residents to apply within their own municipality of residence or place of business.

Importantly, this bill does not eliminate access to concealed carry permits for non-residents. Instead, it directs those applicants to the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office under § 11-47-18, where a more consistent and comprehensive review process can be applied, including an evaluation of both suitability and demonstrated need.

This approach aligns with recent changes to Rhode Island law that emphasize the importance of local knowledge in firearm-related decisions, including the requirement that firearm purchase applications be reviewed by an applicant's hometown police department.

By limiting municipal permitting to individuals with a bona fide connection to the community, this legislation restores the ability of local police chiefs to make informed suitability determinations while ensuring that non-resident applicants are evaluated through an appropriate and consistent statewide process.

For these reasons, I believe House Bill 7754 represents a necessary and reasonable update to Rhode Island law that enhances public safety, improves consistency, and strengthens the integrity of the concealed carry permitting process.

I am happy to answer any questions you may have, and I thank you for your consideration of this legislation.

Sincerely,



Matthew C. Moynihan
Chief of Police