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From: John Lapré Jr. <jlaprejr@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 7, 2026 3:17 PM
To: Rep. Shallcross Smith, Mary Ann; House Judiciary Committee
Subject: Oppose H7755

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Dear Representative Shallcross Smith and House Judiciary Committee,

I am a member of the r/rifguns community on reddit, and a concerned law abiding gun owner in the state of Rhode Island.

I am writing to express my opposition to H7755, which would require individuals to complete mandated additional training prior to purchasing a firearm.

While firearm safety training is valuable and widely encouraged by our community, mandating it as a prerequisite to exercising a constitutional right raises significant concerns. The Supreme Court's decision in *New York State Rifle & Pistol Association v. Bruen* made clear that the Second Amendment is not a second-class right and that states may not impose burdens that are inconsistent with the Nation's historical tradition of firearm regulation.¹

Courts have also recognized that training requirements can become unconstitutional when they function as barriers to exercising a fundamental right. In *Ezell v. City of Chicago*, the Seventh Circuit struck down a regulatory scheme that effectively prevented lawful firearm training, emphasizing that the right to keep and bear arms must remain practically accessible.²

We do not need to speculate about hypotheticals here either. Real-world experience further demonstrates how training mandates can become burdensome in practice. In jurisdictions such as Washington, D.C., following the *District of Columbia v. Heller* decision, limited availability of approved instructors and training facilities created delays, increased costs, and in some cases required residents to travel outside their jurisdiction to comply with the law. These types of bottlenecks illustrate how otherwise seemingly well-intentioned requirements can function as practical barriers to exercising a constitutional right.

In addition, conditioning the exercise of a constitutional right on the completion of a paid training course raises concerns similar to those addressed in *Harper v. Virginia Board of Elections* where the Supreme Court held that the government may not impose financial barriers (such as poll taxes) on the exercise of fundamental rights.³ The Court has also made clear in *Murdock v. Pennsylvania* that a state may not require the payment of a fee as a condition for exercising a constitutional right.⁴ Mandatory training requirements, which often involve fees and logistical hurdles, risk creating similar barriers for law-abiding citizens. We would not accept such hurdles if applied to voting, exercising our free speech, or

practicing our religion for example. We should not accept it when it comes to exercising the right to keep and bear arms.

In practice, such requirements can involve course fees, scheduling delays, travel, and time away from work. These burdens fall disproportionately on working-class, lower-income individuals, and those with less flexible schedules. Conditioning access to a fundamental right on the ability to navigate these hurdles risks creating inequitable outcomes.

If the General Assembly's goal is to improve public safety, efforts would be better focused on enforcing existing laws against criminal misuse of firearms (or passing laws like H7366) rather than imposing new prerequisites on those who already follow the law.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to oppose H7755.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
John Lapre Jr
Lincoln, Rhode Island

References

New York State Rifle & Pistol Association v. Bruen, 597 U.S. 1 (2022).

https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/21pdf/20-843_7j80.pdf

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Harper v. Virginia Board of Elections, 383 U.S. 663 (1966).

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Murdock v. Pennsylvania, 319 U.S. 105 (1943).

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