



Matthew C. Moynihan
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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 8067 – Firearm Prohibitions / Felony Convictions

Dear Chairwoman McEntee,

I am writing to express my support for House Bill 8067, which addresses an important gap between Rhode Island law and federal law regarding firearm possession by individuals with felony convictions. I would also like to thank the sponsors of this legislation for advancing a proposal that strengthens clarity, consistency, and public safety.

Under federal law, specifically 18 U.S.C. § 922(g), individuals convicted of any felony offense are prohibited from possessing firearms. This prohibition applies broadly to all felonies, regardless of whether the offense is classified as violent or non-violent.

In contrast, Rhode Island law currently focuses its state-level firearm prohibitions primarily on individuals convicted of crimes of violence and certain specified offenses. As a result, there are circumstances where an individual may not be explicitly prohibited under Rhode Island statute from possessing a firearm, yet remains prohibited under federal law.

This creates a gap in enforcement and clarity. Individuals may believe they are legally permitted to possess a firearm under state law, while in reality they remain prohibited under federal law. Law enforcement is then placed in a position where enforcement relies on federal prosecution rather than a clearly aligned state statute.

While it may appear that current law is sufficient without including all felony offenses, there are felony cases that fall outside the definition of crimes of violence that still raise legitimate public safety concerns. For example, an individual convicted of a felony offense involving the possession of ghost guns or other firearm-related offenses may not be captured under Rhode Island's current disqualifying categories. These types of offenses demonstrate conduct directly related to firearms and public safety, yet are not always included within the existing statutory framework. This legislation would eliminate that gap.

House Bill 8067 addresses this issue by aligning Rhode Island law with federal standards, explicitly prohibiting firearm possession by individuals convicted of felony offenses. This provides clear and consistent guidance to the public and law enforcement, eliminating ambiguity and strengthening the enforceability of firearm prohibitions at the state level.

From a public safety perspective, this is a reasonable and necessary step. It ensures that individuals who are already prohibited under federal law are also clearly prohibited under state law, allowing for more consistent enforcement and accountability.

Additionally, this legislation reduces confusion related to expungement and restoration of rights. While Rhode Island law may allow for certain records to be expunged, that does not always satisfy federal requirements for firearm possession. Aligning state law with federal standards helps eliminate that inconsistency and provides clearer expectations for individuals.

This bill does not expand federal law—it simply brings Rhode Island law into alignment with existing federal prohibitions.

For these reasons, I believe House Bill 8067 represents a practical and necessary update that improves clarity, strengthens enforcement, and enhances public safety.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Matthew C. Moynihan', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Matthew C. Moynihan
Chief of Police