



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND  
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

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*Peter F. Neronha*  
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April 8, 2026

The Honorable Carol Hagan McEntee  
Chairwoman  
House Committee on Judiciary  
State House, House Lounge  
Providence, RI 02903

**Re: HB 8067 – Felon Firearm Possession**

Dear Chairwoman McEntee and Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

I write today to express support for HB 8067, legislation that would disqualify individuals with prior felony convictions from purchasing or possessing a firearm. Preventing access to firearms by those who have demonstrated serious criminal behavior is a longstanding and widely accepted safeguard, and this bill directly advances that objective.

Federal law already prohibits firearm possession by individuals with felony convictions. See [18 U.S.C. § 922\(g\)](#). This legislation does not create any new prohibition; rather, it closes gaps in existing state law and aligns Rhode Island with long-established federal standards. In doing so, it ensures that my Office can take appropriate action in cases where federal enforcement may be lacking.

Effective firearms policy must balance two critical goals: protecting public safety while respecting the rights of law-abiding individuals. Currently, Rhode Island law restricts firearm possession for only a narrow category of violent felonies. As a result, individuals convicted of other serious offenses may still legally possess firearms, creating significant public safety risks. For example, an individual previously convicted of unlawful firearm-related offenses – such as carrying a firearm without a permit or possessing a ghost gun or similar untraceable firearms – would not be prohibited from possessing a firearm under state law (though they would be prohibited under federal law).

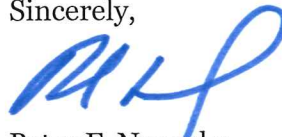
In addition to aligning Rhode Island with existing federal law, this bill does not impose any new mandatory minimum sentence. Instead, it establishes a new provision with a carve out from the existing mandatory minimum. With respect to existing law, this legislation clarifies that a portion of a sentence may be suspended after two years, thereby restoring judicial discretion that is currently missing.

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This legislation addresses an important public safety concern in a constitutionally permissible manner. The federal felon-in-possession statute has been upheld for decades, and the United States Supreme Court has repeatedly declined, as recently as this year, to revisit its constitutionality as applied to individuals convicted of non-violent felonies.<sup>1</sup>

This proposal represents a measured and responsible approach to reducing gun violence. As always, I appreciate the Committee's consideration of this common-sense public safety legislation and am available for any questions the Committee may have.

Sincerely,



Peter F. Neronha  
Attorney General

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<sup>1</sup> See *Vincent v. Bondi*, 127 F.4th 1263 (10th Cir. 2025), *cert. denied*, No. 24-1155 (U.S. Mar. 2, 2026); *United States v. Thompson*, No. 24-4649, 2025 WL 2438487 (4th Cir. 2025) (mem.), *cert. denied*, No. 25-5434 (U.S. Mar. 2, 2026); *United States v. Duarte*, 137 F.4th 743 (9th Cir. 2025), *cert. denied*, No. 25-425 (U.S. Jan. 20, 2026).