

Date: April 15, 2026

To: Chairman Craven and Members of the House Judiciary Committee

From: Melissa Ames, Advocacy Chair, American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP), Rhode Island Chapter

Re: Support for H 8069 – Suicide Awareness at Shooting Ranges

Chairman Craven and Honorable Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Rhode Island Chapter of the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP), I am writing to support **H 8069**, which concerns suicide awareness and prevention protocols at shooting ranges.

As an organization dedicated to saving lives and bringing hope to those affected by suicide, AFSP recognizes that effective prevention requires meeting people where they are. **H 8069** introduces high-impact, low-burden interventions that target specific points of risk within the shooting sports community.

Visibility of Crisis Resources

The requirement for shooting ranges to conspicuously display signage for the **988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline** and the **Crisis Text Line** is a vital step. In moments of acute distress, immediate access to help is essential. By placing these resources in plain view, we ensure that individuals in crisis—or those concerned about a peer—know exactly where to turn for professional, 24/7 support.

Empowering Range Staff through Training

The provision for employee training on the warning signs of suicide is a proven life-saving strategy. Range staff are often the primary point of contact for visitors. Equipping them with the ability to recognize "red flags" and the knowledge of how to intervene safely can prevent a tragedy before it occurs. This "gatekeeper" training is a cornerstone of public health safety.

Safety through Connection

By requiring non-members to be accompanied by a member or staff, **H 8069** reduces isolation, which is a major risk factor for suicide. This simple oversight measure ensures that individuals are not left alone in a moment of vulnerability and creates a safer environment for everyone on the premises.

Suicide prevention is a shared responsibility. **H 8069** fosters a critical partnership between the suicide prevention community and firearm stakeholders to protect neighbors and loved ones.

Passing **H 8069** would strengthen the safety net in the Ocean State. Thank you for your leadership and for your dedication to the mental well-being of all Rhode Islanders.

Sincerely,

Melissa Ames

Advocacy Chair, AFSP Rhode Island Chapter