

Dear Chairman McEntee and Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

My name is Jeff Simmons, and I live in Pawtucket. My elected Representative is Jennifer Stewart, and I am writing today to express my support of House Bill 8073, *Unlawful Possession of Firearms Act*.

My support for the proposed bill focuses on the fact that it addresses a loophole in the assault weapons ban passed last year (2025 -- S 0359 SUBSTITUTE A; *Unlawful Sale of Prohibited Firearms*). While this law was an important step forward in gun safety in Rhode Island by preventing the manufacture, sale, offer to sell, and transfer of assault weapons, the final version of the law allows for the **possession** of these same firearms. This represents an inconsistency in logic. Why should someone be allowed to possess a firearm that is considered too dangerous to the public to legally manufacture, buy, sell, or otherwise transfer? The proposed bill addresses this issue by outlawing possession but also allows for current gun owners to sell or transfer their weapons by December 31, 2026.

Rhode Island has suffered recent high profile mass shooting events at Brown, and in my community at the Lynch Arena in Pawtucket. Although neither event seems to have involved use of an “assault weapon” as defined under the 2025 law, they do represent horrific events that were previously thought “unthinkable” by many. Given the number of mass shootings in the US every year, as well as two in the past four months here in RI, these events are too commonplace. The potential for another incident is still present unless responsible gun safety measures are put in place. Because of this, it is incumbent on the Legislature to do all it can to protect Rhode Island citizens by reducing the risk of another mass shooting, potentially resulting in even greater carnage because of the use of an assault weapon that remained in our community because of the current loophole.

I urge you to vote this bill out of committee and to send it to the House floor with a recommendation of passage. Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this legislation.

Respectfully,

Jeff Simmons

Cc: Rep. Jennifer Stewart