

Dear members of the Rhode Island General Assembly, my name is Brianna McNamara and I submit this testimony in **strong support of H-8055** Relating to Criminal Offenses - Assaults.

This topic is very personal to me, as a member of my family was the victim of an attempted murder. At 18 years old, she was stabbed 27 times by a stranger while she worked. She survived the assault thanks to bystander intervention, without which, her attacker would have succeeded. Intention matters. It has to matter. Making the decision to take a life, whether it's premeditated or spur-of-the-moment, should come at a very high cost, and it should never be taken so lightly. Just because a victim *happens* to survive does not lessen the severity of the situation.

It is, unfortunately, not universally believed that killing another human being is abhorrent in every way. This is why we have legal deterrents in place, so those who would consider committing such acts stop, think about the consequences to them (and by proxy, their families) and find another way to conduct themselves. With the current law, attempted murder has a sentencing range of one to twenty years. In my opinion, having the range start so incredibly low sends a very, *very* dangerous message to people who are willing to commit violent acts against another. Those people know that in the case they are not successful in murder, or if they bring another person to the brink of death, they have a chance of doing minimal time in prison. I worry for the safety of myself, my loved ones, and the members of my community that the punishment for attempting murder is currently so low. Not only that, I worry about those attempted murderers getting out of prison on parole, well before their court-decided sentence has been completed.

As I stated earlier, intention matters. Attempted murder is usually only classified as such because of immediate medical intervention, bystander intervention, interruptions, the strength and willpower of the victim, and probably also a bit of luck on the victim's side. The attacker's failure to end a life does not change the fact that they intended to, and just because a victim is left alive, doesn't mean the person that they were before the attack will still be there. The victim will be left with severe trauma, both physical and mental, and they will never be the same person they were. Especially in cases where the attack was done in a public place, in broad daylight, by a complete stranger. The victim will always have their guard up, for the rest of their lives. No matter where they go, who they're with, or what they are doing - they will always be hypervigilant of their surroundings. H-8055 is about the safety, well-being, and peace of mind of the community. Attempting to rob someone of their personal belongings and attempting to end someone's life should not come with the same sentencing, which it currently does.

Increasing the minimum sentencing isn't only about deterring would-be murderers, it's about ensuring that those attackers are properly punished for their horrific actions, and preventing them from being released before their full time has been served. As a community, we cannot allow this

2026 H-8055

violence and rage to go unpunished. This bill is about protecting the people of Rhode Island, and appropriately punishing those who would try to kill them.

I urge the committee to support bill H-8055, for the safety and security of every Rhode Islander.

Respectfully,
Brianna McNamara
Warwick