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November 7, 2025, at approximately 3:50 PM, my 22-year-old son, James—affectionately known as JJ—died by suicide at a gun range in Rhode Island.

JJ was bright, creative, and kind, with a smile that lit up a room. He was a cybersecurity major with dreams, talents, and a future ahead of him.
This is JJ.

I was going ask you to look at his picture for 22 seconds... one second for for each year of his life. But his picture is in the hall as I was not allowed to bring it in.

Three years ago, JJ experienced a mental health breakdown as a freshman in college at Ct State University. From that moment on, life became a cycle of good days and bad. He struggled with medications. He was hospitalized four times. And he was not alone.

We are in the middle of a mental health crisis—right here. Long wait times, limited access to care, and the cost of treatment create barriers that people cannot always overcome.

He returned to college in CT in January 2024. But then came a moment—an impulsive mistake. He damaged his roommate's property by puncturing two tires on his car. He immediately turned himself in, and was remorseful. Still, he was expelled, faced legal consequences, and was flagged as a danger to himself and others—flagging him and preventing him from purchasing a firearm but not renting one!

About a year ago, after his last hospitalization, JJ started a monthly injectable medication. He was in counseling, back in school locally and working. For the first time in a long time, we had hope. He was doing amazing!

I want to be clear: I am not here to debate gun laws.

I am not here to challenge anyone's 2nd amendment rights.

I am here as a mother.

JJ was the second suicide in less than two months at the same gun range.

We put safety measures in place every day for things we hope never happen—CPR training, AEDs, emergency protocols—because saving even one life matters.

What we are asking for is simple.

Clear suicide prevention signage in gun ranges—something that could create even a brief moment of pause.

Training for staff to raise awareness and help identify individuals at risk.

And a requirement that individuals renting firearms are either members or accompanied by one.

Because when someone is in crisis, seconds matter. Impulses pass. It might just stop a permanent decision in a moment of crisis. But access makes the difference.

If JJ had needed to pause... if he hadn't been alone... there is a possibility—just a possibility—that he might still be here. And that possibility is everything.

This bill will not eliminate suicide. But it can slow it down. It can interrupt it. It can save lives.

I am not standing here as an expert, advocate, or professional.

I am standing here as a mother.

A mother who will never hear her son's laugh again.

Never see his smile again.

Never watch him become the man he was meant to be.

Please—do more.

Please—do better.

Please—pass House Bill H-8069.

Thank you for listening to JJ's story—and for helping prevent another family from living this nightmare.

Sent from my iPhone