



**Chief Benjamin H. Witt**

*Chief of Police*

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**60 Wood Street • Coventry, Rhode Island 02816-1690**

**Telephone: (401) 826-1100 Fax: (401) 826-3419**

To: RI House Judiciary  
From: Chief Benjamin H. Witt  
Date: April 4, 2026  
Re: Support of RI Bill H7753

Dear House Members,

I am writing in support of RI House Bill H7753, Relating to Criminal Offenses - Disarming a Peace Officer, as introduced by Representatives Read, Chippendale, Santucci, Noret, Serpa, Spears, O'Brien, Fascia, Corvese and Fellala on February 12, 2026.

This bill will impose felony criminal penalties for any person knowingly removing, or attempting to remove a firearm, or less-lethal weapons from a Peace Officer, and is designed to improve the safety of Peace Officers and the public. The disarming of a peace officer is a nightmare scenario that immediately threatens the lives of all parties. The current criminal penalties are not sufficient to address the gravity of this offense. Lawmakers have recognized this and are attempting to address this issue head on.

As a Peace Officer in the State of Rhode Island for over (26) years, I am in full support of passage of this bill. In my current position as Chief of Police, I recognize the need for this bill to help protect the safety of not only my officers, but the residents of the Town of Coventry.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Chief Benjamin H. Witt*

Chief Benjamin H. Witt

Chief of Police

Coventry Police Department

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