



PORTSMOUTH POLICE DEPARTMENT

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COLONEL BRIAN P. PETERS
CHIEF OF POLICE

April 29, 2026

Chair Carol McEntee and Members
House Judiciary Committee
Rhode Island General Assembly

Re: Support for House Bill 7753 – An Act Relating to Criminal Offenses – Disarming a Peace Officer

Dear Chair McEntee and Honorable Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

I write in my capacity as Chief of Police for the Portsmouth Police Department to express my strong support for **Rhode Island House Bill H 7753**. This legislation would establish a felony offense for any person who knowingly removes or attempts to remove a firearm, weapon, or communication device from a peace officer in the performance of official duties.

This proposal addresses a serious and dangerous vulnerability encountered by law enforcement officers in the field. Any attempt to disarm an officer, whether involving a firearm, less-lethal weapon, or essential communication equipment, creates an immediate and significant threat to the officer, responding personnel, and the public. Such incidents are inherently volatile and can escalate within seconds into critical, life-threatening situations.

House Bill H 7753 provides critical legislation and appropriately recognizes the gravity of this conduct. By classifying these actions as a felony, the legislation establishes a meaningful deterrent and underscores the importance of safeguarding the tools officers rely upon to maintain control, protect themselves, and coordinate effectively with dispatch and fellow responders. The loss or compromise of these tools can severely hinder an officer's ability to manage a situation safely and effectively.

From a law enforcement perspective, this legislation represents a responsible and necessary step to enhance officer safety and reinforce accountability for conduct that endangers the public. Its passage will strengthen protections for those serving on the front lines while promoting safer outcomes in high-risk encounters.

I thank you for your consideration of this important legislation and your continued commitment to public safety in our state.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brian P. Peters
Chief of Police



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