



Matthew C. Moynihan
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April 29, 2026

The Honorable Carol Hagan McEntee
Chairwoman, House Judiciary Committee
Rhode Island House of Representatives
State House
Providence, RI 02903

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

Dear Chairwoman McEntee and Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 7753.

This legislation addresses a critical issue that law enforcement officers encounter in real time during physical confrontations and rapidly evolving incidents. When an individual attempts to take control of an officer's firearm, less-lethal equipment, or communication device, the situation immediately shifts from a controlled response to a potentially catastrophic event. These encounters unfold in seconds, often without warning, and leave little margin for error. Importantly, the danger exists the moment the attempt is made, regardless of whether the individual is successful, because the risk to the officer and others is immediate.

What is particularly important about this bill is that it recognizes the full scope of tools officers depend on to safely perform their duties. In today's policing environment, an officer's radio or communication device is not secondary equipment—it is essential to coordination, situational awareness, and officer safety. The loss of that communication link can isolate an officer, delay assistance, and significantly increase risk for everyone involved. If an officer's weapon or equipment is compromised, that risk extends beyond the officer to bystanders and responding personnel who may suddenly be placed in danger.

House Bill 7753 appropriately treats these actions with the seriousness they warrant. Establishing a clear felony offense for attempting to disarm an officer or interfere with their equipment reinforces a fundamental principle: conduct that creates an immediate and substantial threat to an officer's safety, and by extension the safety of the public, must carry meaningful consequences.

From an operational standpoint, this bill also provides clarity. It sets a clear standard that supports officers in the field, prosecutors reviewing these incidents, and the courts evaluating the conduct. That clarity is important in ensuring consistent accountability.

Ultimately, this legislation is about preventing escalation. When an officer is able to maintain control of their equipment and maintain communication, the likelihood of safely resolving an

incident increases significantly. Conversely, when that control is compromised, the risk of serious injury or loss of life rises for all parties involved.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to support House Bill 7753.

Thank you for your continued consideration of public safety matters and your support of law enforcement across Rhode Island. I would be happy to provide any additional information or answer any questions.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Matthew C. Moynihan', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Matthew C. Moynihan
Chief of Police