

**Kenneth J. Hopkins**  
Mayor



**Colonel Michael J. Winquist**  
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*"A Nationally Accredited Agency"*

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March 13, 2026

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

**RE: Letter of Support for House Bill 7753 –AN ACT RELATING TO CRIMINAL OFFENSES --  
DISARMING A PEACE OFFICER**

Dear Chair McEntee and Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

I am writing in strong support of **Rhode Island House Bill H 7753**, which 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 during the performance of their official duties.

As Chief of the Cranston Police Department, I have seen firsthand the risks officers face when responding to volatile, unpredictable situations. Officers rely on equipment issued to them—including firearms, less-lethal tools such as conducted energy devices and chemical spray, and mobile communication devices—to safely perform their duties and protect the public. Any attempt to disarm an officer or deprive them of their ability to communicate significantly escalates an already dangerous encounter and puts officers, bystanders, and even the suspect at serious risk of harm.

An attempt to take an officer's weapon or disable their communications is an extremely dangerous act that can quickly turn a routine encounter into a life-threatening situation. Establishing a clear felony penalty for this conduct sends an important message that such behavior will not be tolerated and that the safety of law enforcement officers and the public is a priority.

This legislation also appropriately recognizes the modern tools officers rely on in the field. Today's policing environment requires constant communication and coordination among responding units. A radio or mobile communication device is not merely equipment; it is a lifeline that enables officers to call for assistance, coordinate with partners, and ensure a safe resolution of critical incidents.

Passage of this legislation will provide an important safeguard for the men and women who serve in law enforcement and will help deter conduct that places both officers and the public in immediate danger.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation and for your continued support of policies that enhance public safety.

Respectfully submitted,

*Col. Michael J. Winqvist*

Colonel Michael J. Winqvist  
Chief of Police  
Cranston Police Department