



Matthew C. Moynihan
Chief of Police

South Kingstown Police Department

1790 Kingstown Road
South Kingstown, Rhode Island 02879
(401) 783-3321 Fax (401) 789-8139
www.southkingstownri.com



March 13, 2026

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

Re: Written Testimony in Support of House Bill 7753 – Disarming a Peace Officer

Dear Chairwoman McEntee:

I am writing to express my support for House Bill 7753, legislation addressing the removal or attempted removal of a weapon or communication device from a law enforcement officer during the performance of official duties.

An attempt to disarm a police officer is one of the most dangerous situations that can occur during a law enforcement encounter. When an officer's firearm, less-lethal weapon, or radio becomes the focus of a struggle, the risk of serious injury or death increases dramatically—not only for the officer involved, but also for other officers, victims, and members of the public. The loss of control of a weapon or the loss of communication during a volatile incident can quickly escalate a situation into a deadly confrontation.

In April 2024, officers in Lansing, Michigan conducted a traffic stop that escalated into a physical struggle when the suspect resisted arrest. During the altercation, the suspect was able to obtain control of an officer's firearm and fired a shot, striking an officer in the leg before officers were able to regain control of the situation. The suspect was later charged with multiple felony offenses related to disarming officers and assaulting a police officer with a firearm.

A similar incident occurred here in Rhode Island in September 2023 when Newport Police officers responded to a disturbance involving members of a wedding party outside a restaurant on Bowen's Wharf. During the confrontation, several individuals became combative with officers attempting to restore order. During the incident, one of the individuals involved reached toward and attempted to grab an officer's firearm from his duty belt during the struggle.

Attempts to disarm a police officer are extremely serious acts that can have immediate and potentially fatal consequences. If an individual succeeds in gaining control of an officer's firearm, the potential exists for that weapon to be used against the officer, other officers, or innocent members of the public within seconds. Even the attempt to take an officer's weapon creates a life-threatening situation that places everyone present at significant risk.

House Bill 7753 appropriately recognizes the seriousness of this conduct by specifically criminalizing the removal or attempted removal of a weapon or communication device from a law enforcement officer. Establishing clear statutory penalties for this behavior provides important protection for officers and reinforces the need to maintain officer control during enforcement actions.

For these reasons, I respectfully support House Bill 7753 and urge the committee to give this legislation favorable consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Matthew C. Moynihan', is written over the word 'Respectfully,'.

Matthew C. Moynihan
Chief of Police