



RHODE ISLAND KIDS COUNT

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Testimony Re: Senate Bill 0405 Relating to Courts and Civil Procedure – Protect Rhode Island Families Act
Senate Judiciary Committee
June 6, 2017
Elizabeth Burke Bryant, Executive Director

Madam Chair and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. Rhode Island KIDS COUNT would like to voice its support for Senate Bill 0405, a common sense measure that would limit access to firearms when an individual is under certain types of domestic restraining orders or protective orders issued or renewed on or after July 1, 2017.

Keep Guns Out of the Hands of Individuals Under Domestic Restraining Orders or Protective Orders

In Rhode Island in 2014 (the most recent year for which data are available), there were 5,265 domestic violence incidents that resulted in arrests. Children were reported present during 35% (1,856) of these incidents. Cases of domestic violence are historically under-reported. Nationally, it is estimated that 41% of family violence incidents are not reported to the police. Similarly, Rhode Island data may under-represent the number of domestic violence incidents witnessed by children because not all incidents are reported and children may be unwilling to admit that they witnessed the incident.

Between 2006 and 2015, 19 Rhode Islanders lost their lives to domestic violence homicides with the use of firearms, according to the Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence.

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT believes that any individual who is under a domestic restraining order or protective order should not be allowed to legally carry a firearm. Senate Bill 0405 will protect victims of abuse by restricting their abusers' access to guns and we urge your support.

We thank the Committee for the opportunity to testify today.

