



**RHODE ISLAND KIDS COUNT**

ONE UNION STATION  
PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND 02903  
401/351-9400 • 401/351-1758 (FAX)

**Testimony Re: Senate Bill 0187 Relating to Criminal Offenses - Weapons  
Senate Judiciary Committee**

**June 6, 2017**

**Elizabeth Burke Bryant, Executive Director**

Madam Chair and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. Rhode Island KIDS COUNT would like to voice its support for Senate Bill 0187, which is a common sense measure to keep guns off school grounds.

***Keep Guns Out of Schools***

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT supports Senate Bill 0187, which would provide that only peace officers and individuals approved by school officials for the purposes of educational instruction be permitted to carry firearms or other weapons on school grounds.

According to the national Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence, Rhode Island is one of only 11 states that allow concealed carry permit holders to carry firearms in K-12 schools. We suspect that the many Rhode Island parents would be surprised and concerned to learn that their child's teacher can legally be carrying a firearm in the classroom. Teachers, principals, nurses, coaches, custodians, cafeteria workers, volunteers, parents, or anyone else with a permit to carry a concealed weapon can legally bring their gun on school grounds under current Rhode Island law.

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT is concerned that a weapon could be accidentally or intentionally accessed or fired by a student or teacher. Children and teenagers can be impulsive and unpredictable by nature and we think that the presence of guns in schools makes students less safe. We are not aware of any credible research that armed teachers enhance student safety. On the contrary, we think that the presence of guns in schools increases the likelihood that a tragedy could occur as the result of an accidental, intentional, or self-inflicted shooting.

For these reasons, we urge you to bring Rhode Island in line with our neighbors, Massachusetts and Connecticut, and most other states in the country and pass Senate Bill 0187 to keep guns out of schools.

We thank the Committee for the opportunity to testify today.

