



**RHODE ISLAND KIDS COUNT**

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**Testimony Re: House Bill 5556, An Act Relating to Criminal Offenses – Assault Weapons**

**House Judiciary Committee**

**March 19, 2021**

**Elizabeth Burke Bryant, Executive Director**

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. We would also like to thank Representatives Caldwell, Knight, Blazejewski, Kazarian, Craven, McNamara, Batista, Williams, Amore, and Giraldo for sponsoring this important bill. Rhode Island KIDS COUNT would like to voice its support for House Bill 5556, which would ban assault weapons.

Nationally and in Rhode Island, gun reform remains a key area of focus, especially in the wake of several tragic school and mass shootings over the past decade. Rhode Island KIDS COUNT believes comprehensive state policies to reduce gun violence are long overdue. **House Bill 5556 is a practical step to reduce gun injuries and increase the safety of children in Rhode Island.**



**Gun-Related Emergency Department (ED) Visits, Hospitalizations, and Deaths Among Children and Youth, Rhode Island, 2014-2018**

AGE	# OF ED VISITS	# OF HOSPITALIZATIONS	# OF DEATHS
1 to 14	52	4	0
15 to 17	48	12	4
18 to 19	53	20	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>8</b>

Source: Rhode Island Department of Health, Center for Health Data and Analysis, 2014-2018.

*Note: Effective October 1, 2015, the International Classification of Disease (ICD) codes changed from the 9th classification to the 10th classification, which may impact comparability across the years.*

In Rhode Island between 2014 and 2018, there were 153 emergency department visits, 36 hospitalizations, and 8 deaths of children and youth due to guns.

As we have seen in recent mass shootings, assault weapons allow a shooter to fire large quantities of bullets in a very short amount of time. Because of the rapid firing, assault weapons allow a shooter to injure and kill large numbers of people very quickly and often do not allow time for police to respond.

We strongly urge you to pass House Bill 5556 to ban assault weapons. Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

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