

# RICAGV Regulating Assault Weapons

RHODE ISLAND COALITION AGAINST GUN VIOLENCE

Assault weapons are built for one purpose and one purpose alone: To kill as many people as possible in as short a period of time as possible. These weapons of war have no place in the hands of Rhode Island civilians.

**HB5300** – Sponsored by Representatives Knight, Caldwell, Batista, Felix, Craven, McEntee, Kazarian, Ajello, Giraldo, Boylan, **39 total sponsors**

**SB0379** – Sponsored by Senators Miller, Goodwin, Euer, Acosta, Lawson, McKenney, LaMountain, Kallman, Gallo, Cano, **23 total sponsors**

## What would these bills do?

- Ban the possession, sale, and transfer of assault weapons.
- Possession of assault weapons owned on the effective date of the act would be “grandfathered,” but their use would be limited to certain specified areas.

## Strong public support

**70.5%**

of Rhode Islanders support regulating assault weapons

Source: 2020 poll conducted by Center for Research & Public Policy for RICAGV

## Assault weapons inflict battlefield injuries

The AR-15 was **developed for the military and was field tested in Vietnam in 1962**. Reports indicated that “the very high-velocity AR-15 projectiles” had caused:

- **Amputation of limbs**
- **Massive body wounds**
- **Decapitations**

Today’s AR-15 and similar military-style rifles retain the same features and capabilities, **except that they do not have fully automatic firing.**

Source: Kolbe v. Hogan, United States Court of Appeals, Fourth Circuit decision

## What is an assault weapon?

Assault weapons are defined in the bills as any semi-automatic rifle equipped with a fixed, high-capacity magazine or that is capable of accepting a detachable magazine and also has one of a number of specified features that are commonly found on these high-powered firearms.

**A new report from Uvalde, TX, indicates that officers delayed their response to the school shooting in part because they were afraid of the gunman’s rifle.**

**“You knew it was definitely an AR. There was no way of going in.”**

- Uvalde Police Department Sgt. Donald Page

**“It’s something you never want to see and it’s something you don’t, you cannot, prepare for. It’s a picture that’s going to stay in my head forever, and that’s where I’d like for it to stay.”**

- Uvalde Texas Coroner, Eulalio “Lalo” Diaz, Jr., on what he saw at Robb Elementary.

**RICAGV**  
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## Regulating assault weapons prevents deaths from mass shootings

- A 2019 study found that mass shooting fatalities were **70% less likely** to occur from 1994 to 2004, when there was federal prohibition on assault weapons.
- Between 2009 and 2020, when assault weapons were used in a mass shooting, **six times as many people were shot, twice as many people were killed and 22 times as many people were wounded per incident on average**, compared to mass shootings where assault weapons were not used.

Source: Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, "Twelve Years of Mass Shootings in the United States," June 4, 2021

## The mass shooter's weapon of choice

Since 2012, **the seven deadliest mass shooting incidents in America all involved the use of assault weapons** (Las Vegas, NV; Orlando, FL; Newtown, CT; Sutherland Springs, TX; and El Paso, TX, Parkland, FL, Uvalde, TX).

## AR-15 vs. 9mm handgun

**"One looks like a grenade went off in there, the other looks like a bad knife cut."**

-Dr. Peter Rhee, Section Chief, Trauma and Critical Care, Westchester Medical Center

## Regulating assault weapons is constitutional

- Courts across the country have reaffirmed that **gun safety laws are constitutional** and not in conflict with Second Amendment rights.
- Nine states plus DC currently have some form of assault weapons prohibition in place, **including CT, MA, NY, NJ, DE, MD, CA, HI and IL**.
- Lower courts have **repeatedly upheld these laws as constitutional**.

**"The AR-15 allows shooting on target literally as rapidly as the trigger can be pulled, while providing ample bullet speed to inflict lethal wounds."**

- Dr. Ernest E. Moore, Journal of Trauma, in reference to the Parkland, FL school shooting

## Assault weapons are a hazard in Rhode Island and pose a serious risk to law enforcement

- On Feb. 10, 2022, **a gunman fired hundreds of rounds of ammunition at Providence police** officers using a cache of 15 weapons, including high-powered assault weapons, leading to a half-hour shoot out.
- On Aug. 11, 2021, **a gunman used an AR-15 to fire upon a Providence police** officer responding to a domestic violence call at his residence.

**"Once they [bullets from an assault weapon] enter the body, they fragment and explode, pulverizing bones, tearing blood vessels, and liquefying organs."**

- Dr. Leana S. Wen, Emergency Physician and Visiting Professor at George Washington University School of Public Health

## What about home protection?

In upholding the MA assault weapon ban in 2019, the 1st Circuit Court of Appeals said there was **no evidence an assault weapon has ever been used for home defense**:

**"In fact, not one of the plaintiffs or their six experts could identify even a single example of the use of an assault weapon for home self-defense, nor could they identify even a single example of a self-defense episode in which ten or more shots were fired."**

Source: Worman v. Healey, United States Court of Appeals, First Circuit decision