



**GIFFORDS**



# FACTSHEET: THE RHODE ISLAND FIREARM INDUSTRY ACCOUNTABILITY ACT

**[H 7557](#) (Representative Donovan) & [S 2611](#) (Senator Lauria)**

Rhode Island must ensure that victims harmed by the misconduct of firearms manufacturers, distributors, or dealers have the same access to our justice system as anyone else. H 7557 and S 2611, the Rhode Island Firearm Industry Accountability Act, will put public safety in Rhode Island before the profits of gun industry CEOs.

- **The Problem:** Currently, federal law provides [sweeping immunity to the gun industry](#) from most types of civil lawsuits—exempting highly profitable corporations from most normal mechanisms of accountability in court. **No other industry in America enjoys this kind of protection.**

This invites a race to the bottom, providing a competitive advantage to irresponsible businesses that skirt the rules and fail to take reasonable steps to protect human life and safety. It is also a special interest giveaway that singles out victims of gun violence and denies them equal access to the civil court system.

**But states are not powerless to act to promote victims' rights.** The federal firearm industry immunity law allows lawsuits to proceed if victims of gun violence can prove they were harmed by a firearm industry member's violation of state laws regulating the firearm industry. This preserves a clear role for states to prescribe and enforce standards of responsible business conduct for the firearm industry, including manufacturers, distributors, and dealers, and to create a clear cause of action for victims harmed by violations of state law.

- **The Solution:** This industry accountability legislation (H 7557 and S 2611) establishes a firearm industry standard of responsible business conduct. It also establishes a cause of action to ensure victims of gun violence (or the state's attorney general acting on their behalf) can seek fair justice in court if they can prove they suffered actual harm as a result of a gun industry member's irresponsible conduct.

This standard requires firearm industry members to:

- Ensure compliance with Rhode Island law and not promote the unlawful manufacture, sale, possession, marketing, or use of firearms.
- Implement reasonable business practices to prevent sales to straw purchasers, firearm traffickers, or persons prohibited from possessing firearms.
- Take steps to prevent theft or loss of firearms.

Similar legislation has been enacted in 10 other states, including Connecticut most recently, and courts have rejected nearly all challenges to these laws. For example, a federal district court in New York [upheld](#) New York's law, finding the law similar to "the myriad of safety state laws and regulations with which every industry must comply."

**The Rhode Island Firearm Industry Accountability Act would ensure that irresponsible gun companies can be held accountable by those that they harm.**

For more information, please visit [GIFFORDS Law Center's website](#).