



Rhode Island State Council of Churches and the Rhode Island Bible Society

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Executive Minister

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March 11, 2024

The Honorable Robert E. Craven
Chair, House Judiciary Committee
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

Re: Support for H-7217 & H-7373

Dear Chairman Craven and Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

The spiritual call to love is a call to non-violence. It is an embrace of a new way of being in the world, a way of being that not only embraces our common and inter-connected humanity, but also seeks to dismantle violence wherever it finds it.

In contrast to the Roman State, early Christian reflection on violence provided a clear alternative. Jesus instructed his followers to pray for their enemies and to include those who had been cast aside, while undermining the violence that underpinned Roman economic and political structures. Despite the later imperialization of the Christian state, Jesus' teaching of compassion and non-violence remained interwoven throughout.

Fear, anger, and scare are a part of the human experience – the spiritual skill is in recognizing when we feel those feelings, and learning how to transform them into love, peace, and joy.

The primary question here is this: in matters of civil society, do we have a communal responsibility to one another? Banning assault style weapons and requiring safe storage speaks to the moral, spiritual, and civic responsibility we have to care for one another.

The Council urges passage of H-7217 and H-7373. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Jeremy Langill
Executive Minister