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**COMMENTS IN OPPOSITION TO H 7938 – RELATING TO EDUCATION –
MAINTENANCE OF ORDER ON CAMPUS
May 2, 2018**

The ACLU of Rhode Island remains opposed to this legislation, which would arm campus police officers regardless of the decisions made by the leadership of each institution.

Under current law, every public institution is able to set their own policy for arming their officers. Currently, the University of Rhode Island has taken advantage of this and arms its campus police. Both the Community College of Rhode Island and Rhode Island College have decided that arming their campus police is not in the best interest of their respective campuses.

There is a tremendous danger inherent in introducing guns to college campuses. While there is always the hypothetical situation in which campus law enforcement officers could benefit from being armed, it is a certainty that introducing weapons to college campuses brings with it the very real danger of accidental discharges and tragic cases of misunderstandings and misidentifications. This is something that should be carefully considered before any action regarding bringing guns to campus is undertaken, which each of these institutions has done, and made their respective decisions on the matter.

In light of the safety concerns regarding arming campus officers, we believe this decision is best left where it currently is, and that legislation to remove institutional authority in this matter is inappropriate and should be rejected at this time.