



128 Dorrance Street, Suite 400
Providence, RI 02903
Phone: (401) 831-7171
Fax: (401) 831-7175
www.riaclu.org
info@riaclu.org

ACLU OF RI POSITION: OPPOSE

COMMENTS IN OPPOSITION TO 22-H 7459, RELATING TO EDUCATION – MAINTENANCE OF ORDER ON CAMPUS March 29, 2022

The ACLU of Rhode Island opposes this legislation, which would arm campus police officers in the state's public colleges and universities, regardless of the decisions made by the leadership of each collegiate 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 a 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 should be carefully considered before any action regarding bringing guns to campus is undertaken. Indeed, each institution has done precisely that, and reached their respective conclusions 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.