



Written by [Ty Bodden](#) on April 7, 2026

Rhode Island Moves Toward Gun Confiscation

Rhode Island lawmakers are considering a bill that would turbocharge the state's draconian gun control from banning the future sale of certain firearms — so-called assault weapons — to criminalizing possession itself. This would mark a major escalation, turning many otherwise law-abiding gun owners into potential felons. [House Bill 8073](#), introduced on February 27 and scheduled for a House Judiciary [hearing](#) on April 8, would amend current law by adding the word “possess” to the list of prohibited acts.



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Under the bill's text, no person could “manufacture, sell, offer to sell, transfer, possess, or purchase” a prohibited firearm. Violations would be punishable by up to 10 years in prison, a fine of up to \$10,000, and forfeiture of the firearm. Although lawful owners would be permitted to sell or transfer such firearms to a federally licensed dealer or to someone outside Rhode Island where possession is legal, the bill offers no true grandfather clause allowing current owners to keep their lawfully acquired property.

Important Lesson

This controversy underscores a broader lesson. Gun-control [advocates](#) often insist that bans on so-called assault weapons are limited measures aimed only at future sales, but HB 8073 shows how quickly those assurances can give way to outright possession bans. Washington Gun Law's William Kirk [argued](#) that Rhode Island's proposal confirms what many gun owners have long warned: Once lawmakers establish the power to prohibit the sale of commonly owned firearms, the next step is often to prohibit possession as well.

From a constitutional standpoint, this proposal should alarm every American, not just Rhode Islanders. The [Second Amendment](#) protects the right of the people to keep and bear arms, and a state should not be allowed to convert peaceable citizens into criminals for keeping firearms they acquired legally. If enacted, HB 8073 would not merely regulate commerce — it would pressure citizens to surrender, sell, or remove their property under threat of severe punishment. Rhode Island's House Judiciary Committee should reject this bill, and legislators nationwide should recognize it as another example of how “reasonable restrictions” can become confiscatory policy in short order.



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