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**COMMENTS IN OPPOSITION TO H 5279 – RELATING TO EDUCATION –
MAINTENANCE OF ORDER ON CAMPUS
April 24, 2013**

The ACLU of Rhode Island remains opposed to this legislation, which would arm campus police officers regardless of the approval of the board of governors of higher education.

Under current law, campus police officers may be armed *if* authorized by the board of governors of higher education. That the board has not chosen to take this step in the last several years is reflective of the 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 the board of governors has weighed heavily for several years, and which should be carefully considered before any action regarding bringing guns to campus is undertaken.

In light of the safety concerns regarding arming campus officers, we believe this decision is best left to the board of governors of higher education, and that legislation to remove their authority in this matter is inappropriate and should be rejected at this time.