

**GUN
CRIMES
REPORT
2025**

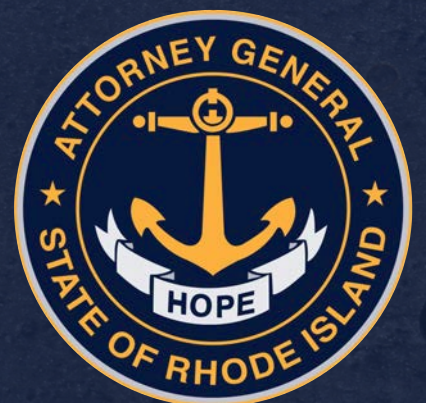




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Introduction

The Honorable K. Joseph Shekarchi

The Honorable Valarie J. Lawson

Re: Annual Gun Crimes Report for 2025

Dear Speaker Shekarchi and President Lawson:

Within the last four months, Rhode Islanders have experienced two unprecedented mass shootings. The trauma felt community-wide as a result of the Brown University shooting in December and the Lynch Arena shooting in February cannot be quantified by this or any other report. Whether gun crimes have trended up or down in 2025 (they have trended up a bit) is almost a moot point when a community as tight-knit as Rhode Island is still mourning in the aftermath of such tragedies.

And yet, our Office continues to work tirelessly to address gun violence. Through our successful enforcement of existing laws, advocacy for new laws, and our proactive collaboration with state and local law enforcement, we continue to use every tool at our disposal.

Consistent with my statutory duties under R.I.G.L. § 42-9-12.1, I submit this year's report to provide certain statistics involving firearms offenses in 2025. As in years past, this report provides additional details beyond what is required to illustrate our commitment to fighting violent crime in our communities.

It is impossible to truly know how many gun crimes and instances of gun violence were avoided through our application of common sense gun laws, such as those mandating safe storage and prohibiting ghost guns and straw purchasing. But what I do know is that Rhode Islanders deserve to live free from the threat of gun violence, and my Office will continue to do everything we can to keep them safe.

Sincerely,



Peter F. Neronha



2025 by the Numbers

787

cases charged
& disposed

320

cases involving magazines
with capacity 11-30+

430

cases disposed
statewide

247

cases involving
multiple firearms

498

cases charged
statewide

81

cases involving
ghost guns

418

cases charged
in Providence County

64

cases involving magazines
with capacity 30+

357

cases charged in 2025
that remain pending

8

cases involving straw purchasing
or “lying & buying”



Data Comparison

	2024	2025	
Cases charged & disposed	751	787	↑
Cases charged statewide	415	498	↑
Cases charged in Providence County	358	418	↑
Cases involving magazines with capacity 11-30	246	320	↑
Cases involving multiple firearms	173	247	↑
Cases involving ghost guns	100	81	↓
Cases involving magazines with capacity 30+	58	64	↑



Combating Violent Crime

Keeping our communities safe and holding accountable those that endanger Rhode Islanders are among the highest priorities for the Office. We support these priorities through effective prosecution, criminal justice investments, and a proactive approach to gun crimes. Here are some 2025 highlights.



COLD CASE UNIT

In 2023, the Office established a Cold Case Unit in the Attorney General's Office to provide for statewide management and advancement of cold cases. Since then, the unit has focused on supporting state and local police departments in their investigations of unsolved cold cases and one member received a certification in forensic genealogy. In 2025, the Cold Case Unit, in collaboration with the North Providence and Narragansett Police Departments, investigated and closed two decades-old homicide cold cases. By investigating and solving cold cases, including those involving guns, we achieve accountability and justice for victims, and deter future crimes.



NATIONAL INTEGRATED BALLISTIC INFORMATION NETWORK (NIBIN)

In 2022, the Office's National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) machine was connected to the NIBIN network and became fully operational, a most significant development in the Office's violent crime initiative. NIBIN machines allow the Office to analyze a shell casing from one shooting and identify connections between that shooting and any other shooting in the Northeast. This investment has allowed our Office to make crucial connections and help crack cases faster, getting guns and violent offenders off the street quicker than ever before. In 2025, RIAG NIBIN received 244 inputs from local police departments, resulting in 86 investigative leads.



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COMMUNITY VIOLENCE INTERVENTION

In 2024, the Office established a new role - the Director of Community Violence Intervention and Prevention (CVIP) - to take a proactive approach to violence intervention. Since then, CVIP has engaged with local municipalities and organizations to bridge the gap between state agencies and the local community. Through CVIP, the Office has supported many community-based organizations' violence prevention grant applications and has provided written support for projects focused on violence intervention and prevention. CVIP secured or assisted in securing federal funds totaling roughly \$936,000 to support a wide range of violence intervention, prevention, and victim services and programs, including enhancement of our Cold Case Unit's use of DNA analysis and upgrades to the State's Victim Notification System (VOICE).



URBAN VIOLENT CRIME INITIATIVE

The Urban Violent Crime Initiative is a prosecutor-led partnership with the Providence, Pawtucket, and Central Falls Police Departments, the Department of Corrections, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives. Working together, prosecutors, investigators, and analysts are gathering data and intelligence, analyzing the information, and setting violent crime enforcement priorities.



Gun Laws in Action

Attorney General Neronha has repeatedly advocated for common-sense measures aimed at preventing gun violence in Rhode Island. This year, the Office's advocacy efforts have translated into laws on the books that are making Rhode Islanders safer. Meanwhile, we have continued our aggressive enforcement of existing laws. Below are some examples of gun laws and relevant 2025 cases resulting from those laws.

DEFENDING COMMON-SENSE GUN LAWS

As legal challenges arise, this Office is prepared to defend common-sense measures aimed at preventing gun violence in Rhode Island. This year, the Office successfully defended Rhode Island's large-capacity magazine ban against a legal challenge which rose to the Supreme Court of the United States.

"My Office has always fought to ensure that we have common sense gun laws on the books to keep Rhode Islanders safe, and today's Supreme Court's decision allows us to continue that mission without interruption," said **Attorney General Neronha**. "The law in question, the state's ban on possession of large-capacity magazines, as well as other gun safety laws are working - and working well - to prevent gun deaths and hold accountable those who commit gun crimes."

GHOST GUNS

Ghost guns continue to be sought out more frequently by those who are otherwise prohibited from lawfully purchasing or possessing guns in Rhode Island. In 2025, our Office charged and disposed of 81 cases involving ghost guns.

On October 31, 2025, **Jovon Depina** (age 28) was sentenced to serve life in prison for the murdering 28-year-old Jovani Velez with a ghost gun in 2022. On October 30, the defendant pleaded guilty to one count of first-degree murder, one count of conspiracy to commit murder, and one count of possession of a ghost gun.



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FIREARMS APPLICATIONS

As previously mentioned, the General Assembly strengthened laws against straw purchasing, and in doing so, reaffirmed laws against lying on a firearm application.

On June 12, 2025, the Office of the Attorney General charged **Alexander Diaz** (age 33), with one count of providing false information while attempting to secure a firearm. As alleged, the defendant lied on his federal application by denying that he had been convicted of domestic violence. Under federal law, individuals convicted in any court of a misdemeanor crime of domestic violence are prohibited from receiving firearms.

LARGE-CAPACITY MAGAZINES

In 2022, the General Assembly passed a bill banning large capacity feeding devices, and since then, our Office has begun charging cases under the new ban. In 2025, there were 320 cases involving magazines with a capacity between 11-30 rounds.

On October 23, 2025, following the conclusion of a 7-day trial, a jury found **Luis Sepulveda** (age 54) guilty of one count of first-degree murder and various other gun-related crimes, including one count of possessing a large capacity feeding device.



