

RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL

No. 495

Approved November 22, 2017

WHEREAS, In recent months, there have been a number of disturbing incidents in which Providence Police Officers had glass bottles and other items thrown at them or their vehicles while on duty, including incidents in which the items were thrown from second and third story balconies and porches; and

WHEREAS, On September 2nd, 2017, while police attempted to disperse a crowd on Eaton Street, people inside a house threw beer cans and other objects at officers from a second floor porch; and

WHEREAS, On September 10th, 2017, beer bottles and cans were thrown at police officers and vehicles from a third floor deck where the officers were responding to a loud and unruly gathering on Eaton Street; and

WHEREAS, On September 15th, 2017, officers were attempting to disperse a crowd estimated at 200-300 people on Eaton Street when items, including beer bottles and cans, were thrown at officers and their vehicles from a second floor porch; and

WHEREAS, On October 29th, 2017, a man threw a bottle at police officers while they were attempting to clear a crowd at the corner of Chad Brown Street and Pembroke Avenue; and

WHEREAS, Also on October 29th, multiple individuals threw objects at police officers, including glass bottles and smoke bombs, when the officers responded to a large and volatile crowd causing property damage on Pembroke Avenue; and

WHEREAS, These brazen attacks show disregard for human life and disrespect for the men and women of the Providence Police Department who work diligently to keep the people of Providence safe; and

WHEREAS, In light of recent incidents and recognizing the dangerous nature of the job, enhanced penalties for those who assault police officers are necessary to reflect the serious nature of the crime and to deter future assaults on officers; and

WHEREAS, Under Rhode Island General Laws § 11-5-2, when assault or battery is committed with “a dangerous weapon,” it rises to the level of felony assault, but the law is ambiguous as to whether a thrown glass bottle qualifies as a “dangerous weapon”; and

WHEREAS, While Rhode Island General Laws § 11-5-5 makes any assault on a police officer engaged in the performance of his or her duty a felony, the penalties for such an assault are far less severe than the penalties under Rhode Island General Laws § 11-5-2; and

WHEREAS, The Providence City Council has a moral obligation to do all in its power to protect its police officers, who have made an oath to protect the people and City of Providence.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the City Council of the City of Providence does hereby request that the General Assembly enact laws increasing the penalty for assaulting an officer and establishing that a thrown glass bottle constitutes a “dangerous weapon” under the State’s felony assault statute.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That, upon passage, copies of this resolution be sent to the Speaker of the House, the President of the Senate, and the entire Providence delegation in the General Assembly.

IN CITY COUNCIL

NOV 16 2017

READ AND PASSED

Safina Metz
ACTING PRES.

Lowell
CLERK

I HEREBY APPROVE.

[Signature]
Mayor
Date: 4/22/17