

In opposition to H5688, H5738, H5739, H5859

To the members of the House Education Committee:

My name is Jacqueline Goldman, I am a resident of Providence and I am writing in strong opposition to bills H5688, H5738, H5739, H5859. These bills represent a violent and regressive attempt to vilify LGBTQIA+, and Black and Brown Communities.

In 2023, there have been more bills created, submitted and passed that hold up White Supremacy. Erasing history, barring communities from participation in sports and public life, and limiting free expression are precursor to genocide. While this seems hyperbolic, I can assure you it is not.

Less than 100 years ago, my family had to flee for their lives because they were Jewish. In the 30's, the Nazi party barred Jewish people from public life, burned books, and limited free expression. The violence continued until 6 million Jews and 11 million people in total were murdered. The Nazi party was able to get away with this because of the years long campaign to erase Jewish communities from public life. The same thing is happening with LGBTQIA+ communities as well as communities of color. If we erase them from the history we teach in schools or bar public participation, we are permitting all out war in the future.

Limiting queer and trans expression and education does not stop queer and trans kids from existing, it stops them from becoming queer and trans adults. This is in part to extremists who gun down our communities, but also because of the harms of systemic villainizing identities that have existed throughout time. The biggest predictor of suicide among queer and trans children is lack of parental and institutional support. This is a statistic that I am sure that you will see over and over and it bares mentioning.

In addition to focusing on the harms these bills cause, and how violent this kind of history has played out in the past, it is important to think about queer and trans joy. For many, the ability to come out and live authentically is a celebration. This has been true in my own life and in the lives of so many others. For me, coming out and living as a queer non-binary person has meant the ability to stop fighting myself every single day. I live authentically and no amount of state sanctioned violence will change this.

You all have the ability to do the right thing today and I hope that you oppose bills H5688, H5738, H5739, H5859.