



# State of Rhode Island

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

REPRESENTATIVE JASON KNIGHT, *District 67*

*Deputy Majority Leader*

*Second Vice-Chair, Committee on Judiciary*

*Committee on Environment and Natural Resources*

*Committee on State Government and Elections*

March 28, 2023

The Hon. Joseph M. McNamara  
Chair, House Education Committee  
Rhode Island Statehouse  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI 02903

Subj: House Bills 5688, 5739, and 5859

Chair,

I'm writing today to express my strong opposition to the above captioned bills. These bills, which purport to enhance the rights of parents over the education of their children by our public schools, are actually an attack on public educators by a small minority looking to spread a vile agenda that is both racist and anti-LGBTQIA.

It is no secret that school districts around the country have been under attack by those who claim that LGBTQIA materials and lessons "poison" the minds of children. Supporters of these efforts often espouse any number of arguments that purport to be reasonable, but they are almost always a thinly disguised attack on people who identify as LGBTQIA.

Likewise, school districts around the country are besieged by people who deny America's history of racial strife and its ongoing effects today. They have tried, and in some cases succeeded, in whitewashing our racial history to prohibit any serious consideration of the effects of that history on society today.

Now those attacks have come to Rhode Island. I am confident they will fail, but if these bills were to pass, undoubtedly the first target would be the LGBTQIA community and transgender people in particular. Under the ruse of "parents' rights" the state would be opening a door for organized attacks on members of the LGBTQIA community based on outdated stereotypes, anti-gay panic, and disrespect for difference.

Fundamentally, parents have always had the right to control their children's education and still do today. Consequently there is no actual need for this legislation. What these bills really do is attempt to single out groups of people and attack them; these attacks are the very essence of bigotry and racism.

I urge you and all of our colleagues to oppose them.

Respectfully,

Jason Knight

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Jason Knight', is written over the printed name. To the right of the signature, the number '07' is written and underlined.