

Lisa Cataldi

From: Brian Odell <bodell275@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 10, 2024 9:15 AM
To: House Education Committee
Subject: YES to H7781

I am writing to express my strong support for Bill H7781, the Parent's Bill of Rights Act.

I never thought we would come to a point when this type of legislation would be necessary. But we have. Even in my own town of North Kingstown, we have school committee members openly stating that parents should not be informed about their own children's records and status. That is wrong! Their aim, clearly, is to willfully withhold important information because they think they know best. This is shocking given that the town remains embroiled in the fallout from the Aaron Thomas molestation case when parents were not informed of the (alleged) sexual abuse. In that case, information was withheld and even hidden. And the school department still hasn't implemented the fixes they promised.

National FERPA laws afford parents and guardians the right to access their child's educational records, the right to have records amended in certain circumstances, and the right to oversight over the disclosure of personally identifiable information from the educational records. However, we now need to take a step further to force schools to disclose important information proactively, especially since their current default is to hide information from parents.

Parents need to be told what is happening with their child. They are the sole guardians of their children and know what's best for them.

Consider Washington State, one of the first states to limit parental rights, has recently reversed course on earlier policies intended to limit parent's access to their children's educational records and status. Let's not make the same mistakes they did.

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