



State of Rhode Island

**Department of State | Office of the Secretary of State**

**Gregg M. Amore**, *Secretary of State*

April 10, 2024

The Honorable Joseph M. McNamara, Chair  
House Committee on Education

RE: In opposition to H7781 – An Act Relating to Health and Safety – Parents Bills of Rights

Dear Chair McNamara,

I write this letter in opposition to House Bill 7781, legislation that is founded on misconception, misinformation, and divisiveness, and it is a prime example of legislation looking for solutions to problems that do not exist. As a certified United States History teacher for over thirty years, I know how critical it is to ensure different perspectives are presented in the classroom and how we must discuss the inequities and disparities experienced by marginalized and vulnerable communities while ensuring their voices are heard.

House Bill 7781 is out of line with the values of the vast majority of Rhode Islanders who understand that, by and large, communities have a positive relationship with their local schools. Seventy percent of Rhode Island parents who completed the Rhode Island Department of Education's Survey Works survey for families characterized their child's school climate as "positive."

This legislation is, in many ways, duplicative of existing fundamental parental rights that are already part of current law and regulation, as it disingenuously implies that schools and parents do not consistently work together to support the whole child. This is simply not true, and the insinuation denigrates the professionalism of the overwhelming majority of educators in Rhode Island.

House Bill 7781 places undue burdens and unclear expectations and consequences upon educators – educators who are already following approved standards and curriculum. The majority of Rhode Islanders reject the false narrative of academic indoctrination and embrace critical thinking based on exposure to different ideas and perspectives.

We cannot infringe upon forums for open discussion, nor should we impede a student's civic participation based on the beliefs of parents – students have the right to their own opinions and should not be discouraged from expressing their own thoughts or beliefs.

Ultimately, we believe that an education that presents a broad range of views prepares students to become lifelong citizens and active participants in our democracy. Therefore, I urge this Committee and the full House to oppose House Bill 7781.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Gregg M. Amore  
Secretary of State

cc: The Honorable Members of the House Committee on Education  
The Honorable Patricia Morgan

State House, Room 218, Providence, RI 02903

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