

Jennifer Lima  
H7781  
Oppose

I am writing today to urge you to reject H7781, the "Parents Bill of Rights Act".

On the surface who can argue with a bill about parents rights. But read the text of the bill and you'll see why the anti-crt, anti-gender theory crowd has rallied around this. This bill is consistent with the other messaging of these groups, both here in Rhode Island and across the country.

It's aimed at limiting what schools can teach and also overturning some built in protections for students. (Specifically this bill could end up outing gay and transgender students in their schools against their will).

The bill would give parents an absolute right to exclude their child from curriculum materials on the basis of "morality, sex, and religion or the belief that such materials are harmful", as well as an absolute right for parents to see and review curricula before they are taught to their children. Public schools do not, and should not, operate that way.

"Empowering parents" sounds good until you realize this type of empowerment comes at the cost of dis-empowering children – not just their own but others as well.

Every family, and every child, is different. And while parents unquestionably have the right to make decisions regarding their own children, public schools exist for all children, not just one's own.

Please do not support these bills. As Margaret Mead said, "children must be taught how to think, not what to think". Schools cannot operate under a model of "parental rights" whereby individual parents decide what their children are taught in school.

Please note that I am currently a member of the school committee in North Kingstown but I am writing as a citizen, not as a member of that body. Thank you.

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