

April 23, 2025

Re: Opposition to H5837 bill

To: The House Education Committee

I am writing in opposition to H5837, changing the consent needed for curriculum. General Law 16-22-18 already allows for students 18+ or parents of children under 18 to review Health and Family Life (Sex Ed) curriculum materials, and they may be exempted from the program without academic penalty. H5837 is not only unnecessary, it is harmful.

The foundation of how children are educated is being undermined by a minority of voices professing moral opposition to teaching anything deemed "inappropriate" including references to LGBTQ+ people, and ethnic or religious diversity. It is vitally important to teach children about people different from themselves, and for children who might feel "different" to see themselves represented. That representation can save lives. Education doesn't make children gay, or Muslim, or change the color of their skin. It teaches empathy, kindness, tolerance.

Allowing parents to vet curriculum as a matter of course undermines and demoralizes our teachers, creates confusion, and allows for rampant misinformation and bias. This bill is about Sex Ed, but it opens the door for parents to review—and weigh in on—everything their children are taught. And it gives those parents power to limit what other children learn. That is unacceptable.

We are headed down a dangerous path where a loud minority of people are attempting to change history and erase the existence of people they don't like. H5837 is a step down that path. Please don't move this forward.

Thank you.

Susan Joyce
Foster RI 02825