

Good afternoon,

My name is Christina Ash, and I am writing in strong support of the School Libraries Act, also known as the Save RI School Libraries Act.

For more than two years, the School Librarians of Rhode Island (SLRI) has been advocating for this important legislation. Now in its third year before the Rhode Island State Legislature, this bill represents a critical opportunity to ensure equitable access to high-quality library programs for every student in our state.

School libraries are not simply rooms filled with books; they are centers of learning, inquiry, and opportunity. Certified school librarians teach essential research, digital literacy, and critical thinking skills that students need to succeed academically and responsibly navigate today's complex information landscape. In an age of misinformation and rapidly evolving technology, these skills are more vital than ever.

Unfortunately, access to strong school library programs is inconsistent across Rhode Island. The School Libraries Act would establish clear expectations and protections to ensure that all students—regardless of zip code—have access to qualified school librarians and well-supported library programs.

Strong school libraries contribute to improved literacy rates, higher academic achievement, and greater student engagement. They support classroom teachers, provide safe and inclusive spaces for students, and foster a lifelong love of reading and learning.

I respectfully urge the Committee to advance the School Libraries Act and take this important step toward educational equity and excellence for all Rhode Island students.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Christina Ash, MLIS