

Anabella Mayorga

From: Sarah Mermin <sarahmermin@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, April 22, 2025 9:10 AM
To: House Judiciary Committee
Subject: Bill 5923

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April 22, 2025

The Honorable Robert Craven Sr.
House Judiciary Committee Rhode Island State House
82 Smith Street Providence, RI 02903

Re: H 5923 – Relating to Criminal Offenses – Children

I am writing to oppose House Bill 5923 because the bill is completely unnecessary and opens the door to the possibility of punishing those distributing legitimate sexual education materials to minors.

For almost 2 decades, Rhode Island has had a "child pornography" law on the books. This current legislation is largely redundant. The existing statute has been effective in providing well defined standards of criminal conduct involving minors.

This proposal differs. leaving terms key to enforcement of the measure including "obscene, lewd, and lascivious" and "serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value", undefined. That leaves what constitutes criminal conduct open to subjective interpretation,. This lack of definition could frame even factual and age-appropriate information on LGBTQ+ identities provided to minors as criminal conduct. Rather than protecting those with RI and upholding our states values as a leader in civil rights and equality, this proposal opens a path to censure the LGBTQ+ community n public life.

I urge the committee to reject the bill.

Sincerely,

Sarah Mermin
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Newport, RI 028409