



To: House Committee on State Government & Elections
From: Erich Haslehurst, National Education Association Rhode Island
Date: April 3, 2025
Re: H5726 – AN ACT RELATING TO LIBRARIES -- THE FREEDOM TO READ ACT

Dear Chairman Shanley and Members of the Education Committee,

I am writing on behalf of the National Education Association Rhode Island and our 12,000 members to express our strong support for H5726, introduced by Representative Morales.

Education is the foundation of our democracy. When we start censoring content for political reasons, we hinder the development of critical thinking and personal growth. Our public libraries and school libraries are staffed with professional librarians who possess advanced degrees and specialized training in library management and content curation. It is crucial that we do not impose restrictions that impede their ability to fulfill their duties by imposing arbitrary regulations.

It is evident that some of the push for censorship stems from a silencing of Black and brown voices and an anti-LGBTQ+ agenda, which is unacceptable. We must not allow the government to dictate what materials are deemed acceptable for public consumption in libraries. Representative Morales' bill, H5726, safeguards our libraries and supports our librarians.

We urge you to pass this bill to protect the honesty and integrity of our libraries and uphold the principles of intellectual freedom.

Thank you.

Erich Haslehurst