

Steven Sepe

From: Leigh Medeiros <noreply@adv.actionnetwork.org>
Sent: Saturday, March 29, 2025 11:28 AM
To: House State Government and Elections Committee
Subject: Support for HB #5726: RI Freedom to Read Act

Committee State Government Clerk,

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill #5726: the Rhode Island Freedom to Read Act.

According to the American Library Association, in 2023 alone, there were 1,247 documented demands to censor books and other library materials, with 4,240 unique titles challenged—an alarming increase from just 223 in 2020. These challenges are not isolated events. They are part of a coordinated movement by organized groups seeking to limit public access to books, particularly those representing diverse voices.

The Rhode Island Freedom to Read Act would:

- Protects librarians, teachers, and museum staff from unjust legal and professional consequences simply for fulfilling their responsibilities. Rhode Island must align with over 40 other states that already provide these protections.
- Establishes a legal recourse for those harmed by censorship, allowing students, authors, publishers, and booksellers to challenge improper government censorship, with legal fees covered outside of library funding.
- Upholds parental choice by allowing families to determine appropriate reading materials for their own children while ensuring that no single group can dictate what others are allowed to access.

Please stand with Rhode Island's educators, librarians, and families by supporting the Rhode Island Freedom to Read Act. Thank you for your time and consideration. I appreciate your leadership and commitment to protecting intellectual freedom in Rhode Island.

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