



RHODE ISLAND  
FEDERATION OF TEACHERS AND  
HEALTH PROFESSIONALS AFT AFL-CIO

To: House Judiciary Committee  
From: James Parisi, Field Representative  
Date: March 20, 2024

Re: **Public Libraries – Affirmative Defense**  
Testimony in **support** of 2024 H 7575 (Morales, et al.)

The Rhode Island Federation of Teachers and Health Professionals supports H 7575. We represent librarians and library aides in public schools and in higher education institutions protected by this legislation.

Rhode Island is one of a handful of states that does not specifically protect librarians and other employees from charges under state obscenity laws. Forty-four states have some type of protection from prosecution for certain professions or types of workplaces. Thirty-one of those states specifically protect librarians from prosecution when working under the scope of their professional responsibilities. Rhode Island is not among the forty-four states that provides some protection from prosecution.

It is concerning that three states weakened their protections last year. It is more concerning that Rhode Island offers no protection in the first place.

There is a growing political controversy surrounding obscenity. We support efforts to protect employees from unjust prosecution and support enacting legislation as proposed by Representative Morales.

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356 SMITH STREET PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND 02908-3761 (401) 273-9800 FAX (401) 331-8815

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• Francis J. Flynn, President • Bonnie Horta, Executive Assistant • Colleen A. Callahan, Director of Professional Issues •  
• Michael J. Mullane, Field Representative • James A. Parisi, Field Representative •  
• Christopher Lambert, Field Representative • Maria Manzi, Administrative Assistant •