

TO: Steven Sepe, Clerk for the House Committee on State Government and Elections
FROM: Christy Chase
DATE: Feb. 28, 2024
RE: H7386, The Freedom to Read Act
Cc: Representative Jennifer Stewart

Dear Steven Sepe,

I am writing to express my strong support of H7386, The Freedom to Read Act. As a former teacher of grades 4-8, I made a concerted effort to display, read, discuss, and love books written by and about a wide variety of people. Students need to see themselves in the books they read, and students need the freedom to read about perspectives other than their own. I believe this makes for a more empathetic populace.

My current profession is writing books for children. I have many friends – fellow writers – whose beautifully-written books have been banned because someone (or some group with an ironic name like Moms for Liberty) decided these books didn't adhere to their narrow definition of what kids should read. I never want to have to make a choice about whether to revise my own work so that it will *not* end up a banned book.

School librarians and public librarians are invaluable resources when it comes to the education of ALL children, not just those deemed acceptable by self-appointed arbiters of culture. Decisions about what books are permitted in libraries should never be held in the hands of the politically-motivated. The rights of librarians need to be protected. Let's remove the fear and restore the joy of reading.

I recommend you pass H7386.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Christy Chase
Pawtucket, RI