

Steven Sepe

From: Gayle Gifford <gayle@ceffect.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 27, 2024 12:16 PM
To: House State Government and Elections Committee
Cc: Rep. Stewart, Jennifer A.; Rep. Kislak, Rebecca M.
Subject: Support for H7386

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I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 7386 The Freedom to Read Act. This bill asserts that it is the responsibility of the state government to support the right of Rhode Islanders to read freely. It protects the freedom of public libraries to acquire and deaccession materials and protects libraries from attempts to ban, remove, censor or otherwise restrict access to books and other materials. Lastly, it asserts that libraries shall provide an adequate collection of books and other materials sufficient in size and varied in subject matter to satisfy the library needs of the people of their communities.

I cannot overstate how critically important this bill is given the horrifying censorship happening around the country. Our libraries are critical public resources and the threats to them are threats to our democratic principles.

I can't say it better that these two former presidents of the USA:

"I have an unshaken conviction that democracy can never be undermined if we maintain our library resources and a national intelligence capable of utilizing them." - Franklin D. Roosevelt, in a letter to publisher Herbert Putnam

"The libraries of America are and must ever remain the home of free and inquiring minds. To them, our citizens - of all ages and races, of all creeds and persuasions - must be able to turn with clear confidence that there they can freely seek the whole truth, unvarnished by fashion and uncompromised by expediency." - Dwight D. Eisenhower