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H7475 - Support - Rhode Island Library Association

H7475 (Rep. Carson) An Act Relating to Libraries – State Library

This bill aims to:

- Modernize the State Library and State Clearinghouse legislation to align with current practices in response to the needs of the state and patrons.
- Align the State Library and State Clearinghouse with current best practices while allowing flexibility for growth with ever-emerging technology and access points to government information.

Why is this legislation needed?

This legislation will modernize the State Librarian and State Clearinghouse statutes, as many of the functions of both the State Librarian and the Clearinghouse Director are outdated in law. For instance:

- Due to the increasing number of government publications being born digitally or published exclusively digitally, it is important that the State Library statute reflects the need to preserve all its materials – print and digital.
- The State Library provides access to its catalog via a commonly used tool so other libraries can see its holdings and gladly provides access to these materials as it is able.
- The Library of Congress scrapes the State Library's online catalog data, which is a service in addition to the State Library providing global access to the records of its holdings and gladly provides access to these materials as it is able.

Elimination of the Clearinghouse Advisory Committee:

- The Clearinghouse Advisory Committee was a valuable committee when all state agency reports were printed publications – when issues of shelf space balanced with access, book binding budgets, and other exclusively printed material concerns were an issue; however, this is no longer the case since most state agency reports are not physically printed.
- Most state agency reports are digital, and the State Library uses a digital preservation software to ensure long-term preservation and access to these materials. Libraries are easily able to point to the State Library catalog or provide links to these holdings, eliminating the issues of exclusively print collections.
- The Clearinghouse Advisory Committee has been without a committee chair since 2021, when the one and only chair retired. No one else on the committee wants to be the chair as most committee members see the committee as unnecessary.
- The committee has not met since April 12, 2021.

The Rhode Island Library Association urges the passage of H7475.