

Steven Sepe

From: E Temel <temelfamily@yahoo.com>
Sent: Sunday, March 30, 2025 11:36 AM
To: House State Government and Elections Committee; Rep. Shekarchi, K Joseph; Rep. Blazejewski, Christopher R.; Rep. Azzinaro, Samuel A.
Subject: Freedom to Read Act H5726, S0238

March 30, 2025

Dear Speaker of the House, Representative Shekarchi, Rhode Island House Majority Leader Representative Blazejewski, Representative Azzinaro, and all Representatives,

My name is Elaine Temel. I am a resident of Westerly, Rhode Island. I am writing in support of the Freedom to Read Act H5726. My position is for the Freedom to Read Act.

Rhode Islanders may assume that book banning is only a problem in red states like Texas and Florida, but in the past three years, Rhode Island school committees have fielded challenges of over twenty books, three of which were contenders for the Rhode Island Children's Book Award. In some places, people have brought lawsuits or criminal charges against librarians for working in a library that had a book in the collection they disagreed with. My home town, Westerly, RI was one of these places.

Book banning is the opposite of a patriotic act. Our Constitution protects our access to information and ideas, necessary for informed debate and a strong democracy. The freedom to read is a liberty essential to the preservation of a free society. As a reader, I want to be able to access whatever I want to read at my local library. I am for S0238. I value the freedom to read and know that the freedom to read is a fundamental American right, protected by the First Amendment and the Rhode Island constitution. All Rhode Islanders will benefit from Freedom to Read legislation. This Rhode Island bill aligns with laws in other states that protect librarians. This bill guards our freedom to create as well as consume art and literature. This bill protects against outside organizations trying to interfere with local school libraries by requiring that anyone who brings a complaint against a book to a school committee must live in the school district. The Freedom to Read Act will support a fundamental American right.

Please vote for the Rhode Island Freedom to Read Act H5726, S0238.

Thank you.

Elaine Temel