



The Rhode Island State
Council of Churches

Rhode Island State Council of Churches and the Rhode Island Bible Society

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April 3rd, 2025

The Honorable Evan P. Shanley
Chair, State Government and Elections Committee
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

re: support of H5726, Freedom to Read

Dear Chairman Shanley and Committee Members:

I am writing today in **support of H5726**. The Rhode Island State Council of Churches recognizes the important role that libraries play in providing access to and promoting literacy, as well as their essential role in the support and development of our democratic norms.

Rhode Island, since its founding, has a long tradition of maintaining appropriate boundaries between the rights and responsibilities of the civil state and religious belief/practice. Roger Williams was keenly aware of the danger of the imposition of religious views through the apparatus of the civil state.

While religious communities are free to practice their beliefs as they see fit and are free to advocate for their values in the context of our political process, they are not free to dictate how or what others should think.

H5726 provides a helpful bulwark against any attempt to restrict access to knowledge or information, even if it offends a particular religious conscious. Religious freedoms are strengthened, not weakened, by a robust civic polity.

The Rhode Island State Council of Churches **urges passage of H5726**.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jeremy Langill
Executive Minister