



**TWP Testimony in support of H5726,
in SUPPORT of the Freedom To Read Act**

April 3, 2025

Dear Chairperson Shanley, Members of the House State Government and Elections Committee,

I am testifying in support of House 5726, The Freedom to Read Bill. This bill supports the continued free flow of information and ideas through the public, and in particular, RI's public libraries. Our libraries are one of the most obvious and fundamental icons of the freedoms guaranteed to all of us in RI. Librarians are trained and trusted to shepherd that freedom, to guard against censorship and ignorance and to champion the universe of ideas in ways that are appropriate for the widest audiences. This bill allows those guardians of knowledge to do their work without fear of the minority of Rhode Islanders seeking to restrict information for a variety of idiosyncratic and even malevolent reasons.

The proliferation of books available with the development of the printing press caused great consternation among many institutions, from monarchies to churches, with good reason. As information became more accessible, oppressed groups came to recognize that their oppression was not some natural order or supernatural mandate, but imposed upon them by a minority for the benefit of that minority. Efforts at throwing off the coils of oppression rapidly grew and while not completely successful, did create new modes of government and economics.

The forces of oppression always seek to curtail the free flow of information because an ignorant citizenry is more readily controlled. No matter what tropes these oppressive forces dress-up to justify this censorship or that, it is always the same goal, the ultimate restriction of access to information. H-5726 helps ensure that those in RI have access to as wide a range of kinds of ideas, opinions and ideas as possible. It ensures that those public servants providing that access can do so free from the idiosyncratic imperatives of a misguided and/or malevolent opposition. Please support H-5226. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Jocelyn Foye, *Executive Director*, The Womxn Project
P.O.Box 335, Wakefield, RI 02880