

EveryLibrary Institute NFP
6433 Fairfield Ave.
Berwyn, IL. 60402



March 31, 2025

House State Government and Elections Committee
Rhode Island State House
Sent % Steve Sepe, Committee Clerk
HouseStateGovernmentandElections@rilegislature.gov

RE: Testimony in Support of H.5726 – The Freedom to Read Act

Dear Chair Shanley and the Members of the House State Government and Elections Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the [EveryLibrary Institute NFP](#), a national public policy organization with a network in Rhode Island and throughout the country, to express strong support for H.5726 – the Freedom to Read Act. This timely and well-crafted bill ensures that Rhode Islanders, especially students and families, retain their right to read freely and explore ideas without political interference or censorship.

H 5726 takes a sensible and practical approach to addressing the challenges of book censorship faced by libraries and schools. It establishes clear policies and protections for librarians and educators, requires that book challenges originate from within the local community, and protects public institutions from frivolous lawsuits. These provisions are not only constitutionally sound but also necessary.

The bill aligns Rhode Island with the 44 states, including all of New England, that already have shield laws protecting library workers. By affirming federal standards for evaluating materials and prohibiting viewpoint-based censorship, H 5726 strengthens Rhode Island's reputation as a state that values creative freedom and professional integrity.

We urge the committee to pass this important legislation and help position Rhode Island as a national model for protecting the freedom to read.

Sincerely,

John Chrastka, Executive Director
EveryLibrary Institute NFP
john.chrastka@everylibrary.org | 312-574-0316