

March 29, 2025

Dear RI State Officials,

I am writing to express my strong support for the Rhode Island Freedom to Read Act (S0238, H5726). As a teacher and a firm believer in the fundamental rights guaranteed by the First Amendment and the Rhode Island Constitution, I urge you to support this critical legislation that protects intellectual freedom and opposes censorship.

The freedom to read is a cornerstone of our democracy, and voters across the country overwhelmingly oppose book banning. In our diverse society, it is essential that students have access to books that reflect their own identities and experiences, as well as those that introduce them to perspectives different from their own. Representation matters—students should see themselves, their families, and their communities reflected in literature, while also gaining an understanding of the broader world around them. Exposure to diverse ideas and narratives fosters empathy, critical thinking, and a well-rounded education.

While parents have the right to guide their own children's reading choices, they should not have the power to dictate what other people's children can or cannot read. Public schools and libraries serve all members of the community, and their collections must reflect a broad spectrum of voices and histories. Students deserve to learn accurate and comprehensive historical facts, free from political interference or whitewashing. Shielding them from uncomfortable truths does not prepare them to be informed and engaged citizens—it only deprives them of the knowledge necessary to navigate the complexities of our society.

I urge you to vote in favor of the RI Freedom to Read Act (S0238, H5726) to ensure that all students in our state have access to diverse literature, accurate history, and the fundamental right to read freely. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Kelly Brum

RI Public School Teacher