

Steven Sepe

From: Kevin Faria <noreply@adv.actionnetwork.org>
Sent: Saturday, March 29, 2025 11:05 AM
To: House State Government and Elections Committee
Subject: Support for HB #5726: RI Freedom to Read Act

Committee State Government Clerk,

East Bay Citizens for Peace are in support of the RI Freedom to Read Act (HB #5726).

Libraries are under attack not only because they house a wide range of information and ideas, some of which an increasingly authoritarian regime happens to find uncomfortable, but because they also provide the means to recognize and repel the assaults on our freedoms by those same forces. Benjamin Franklin, creator of the first public library in America, and his founding brothers were keenly aware that an informed electorate was the key to a vibrant democracy and the best defense against tyranny. They must be rolling in their graves to witness a US. president's attempts to undermine the people's first amendment rights. After all, banning books is a small step away from burning them.

As members of a local grassroots peace and justice group, we are especially grateful for RI libraries for hosting many of our meetings and events over the years — even while we cover some very complicated and sensitive issues. Sadly, in a society where virtual connections are replacing real ones, community is vanishing. It is reassuring to know there are still places where one can gather with others who are interested in learning more about the world, regardless of whether they share the same political views. We must protect libraries like our liberties were at stake because, without intellectual sanctuary, they absolutely are!

Please vote in support of this important bill and thank you for your consideration.

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