

# EBSCO

## Information Services

April 3, 2025

The Honorable Evan Shanley  
Chair

The Honorable Mary Messier  
First Vice Chair

The Honorable Arthur Corvese  
Second Vice Chair

Rhode Island House Committee on State Government and Elections

Re: Support for H 5726 (Freedom to Read Act)

Dear Chair Shanley, Vice Chairs Messier and Corvese, and members of the House Committee on State Government and Elections:

On behalf of [EBSCO Information Services](#) (EBSCO), a leading provider of library research databases and online resources, including in Rhode Island, I write in support of H 5726 (Freedom to Read Act) and to share background and context about EBSCO's library research databases and the librarians and communities who utilize them.

EBSCO Information Services, based in Massachusetts, is a leading provider of research databases and a major provider of library technology and e-books for universities, colleges, hospitals, corporations, government agencies, K-12 schools, and public libraries worldwide. We license and provide content across nearly 400 research databases, each designed to support research and learning for a specific audience or in specific areas of study. Users range from school-age to advanced degree professionals and researchers, and our online resources include trusted sources valuable for research and learning, such as magazines, periodicals, research journals, newspapers, and e-books.

As part of the Statewide Reference Resource Center (AskRI) administered by the Rhode Island Office of Library and Information Services (OLIS), various EBSCO resources are available throughout the state via its schools, public libraries, universities and remotely through AskRI.org.

EBSCO is committed to the First Amendment and the values of intellectual freedom. We believe that libraries should be places for children and adults to learn and explore the world around us, providing a chance for growth in knowledge and skills, like those needed to find a job. Libraries support learning, literacy and critical thinking skills of individuals in our communities, often serve as a community's only free place to access the internet, and provide a wide range of services in their communities, from workforce development to summer reading programs.

Some people have concerns about the content available to children in libraries, but libraries are the solution to these concerns, not the problem. Together with libraries and librarians, EBSCO is committed to maintaining a safe learning and research environment for students, delivering curated content that is age- and developmentally appropriate based on the professional training and expertise of librarians. Libraries and library databases like EBSCO's are maintained by licensed professionals who have undergone years of training to develop and select library collections that reflect the people they serve and the wider world.

We understand individuals and families may have different opinions about content they want their child to access, which is why librarians and libraries cannot function as a stand-in or replacement for parental guidance and supervision. Likewise, borrowing decisions should be determined by each individual or family and based on the

needs and values of their community; no one person or entity – including the state – should determine what people across Rhode Island can access at their local library.

EBSCO stands by librarians, libraries and intellectual freedom in support of HB 5726. Thank you for your consideration. Please let me know if you have any questions about EBSCO and how we collaborate with our customers in Rhode Island.

Sincerely,

Scott Bernier  
Vice President for Library and Government Relations  
EBSCO Information Services