

PubPros Against BookBans

April 2, 2025

House State Government and Elections Committee
Rhode Island State House
Sent c/o Steven Sepe Committee Clerk
HouseStateGovernmentandElections@rilegislature.gov

RE: Testimony in Support of H5726 – The Freedom to Read Act

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

I am writing as part of the leadership team of Publishing Professionals Against Book Bans, a national coalition of publishers, editors, publicists, book marketers, agents, and industry professionals standing united against the deeply unconstitutional movement to limit the freedom to read, to express support for H5726, the Freedom to Read Act.

As a senior literary agent at Aevitas Creative Management with clients who currently have books censored and removed from shelves in various states across the country, I see firsthand the devastation of these actions on the life and well-being of an author. Many of my authors and illustrators write and create stories that are meaningful to them so that a new generation of readers can imagine themselves thriving in the world. This ability is foundational to a child's developmental growth in order to mature into functional adults. Imagine spending years working on a book only to have someone say that it shouldn't be allowed to be read by anyone? To ensure creative freedom for our authors, we must defend their right to write and a reader's right to read.

Personally, as a young and voracious reader who learned to read from a public library and roamed the shelves in search of stories to excite my imagination, having books freely available to me was a huge reason I learned to read so fast so young and led me to my work in the publishing industry. Even today as a grown-up, I never leave the house without a book. Just in case.

I support H5726, the Freedom to Read Act, because it's necessary to protect Rhode Island residents and their ability to read freely and voraciously.

Sincerely,

Tricia Lawrence

Leadership of Publishing Professionals Against Book Bans and Senior Agent, Aevitas Creative Management