

RI FREEDOM TO READ ACT (S0238, H5726)

WESTERLY WRITERS GROUP RESOLUTION

15 Mar 2025

WHEREAS, the freedom to read is a fundamental human right essential to democracy and enshrined in the Constitution, ensuring free access to diverse ideas and perspectives; and

WHEREAS, the freedom to write and freedom of speech are intrinsically linked to the freedom to read, all fostering creativity, innovation, and the open exchange of ideas necessary for a thriving democratic society; and

WHEREAS, censorship and book challenges in Rhode Island have escalated due to external influences, threatening intellectual freedom and the ability of students, families, and educators to access a broad range of materials; and

WHEREAS, 71% of voters oppose book bans; 91% agree other people shouldn't control what their families can read; and

WHEREAS, 44 States - including all of New England except Rhode Island, have enacted Freedom to Read Shield Laws to protect school officials and librarians and from legal consequences when providing access to diverse materials; and

THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED, that we oppose all efforts to ban books or censor materials in schools and libraries, advocating instead for library policies that uphold free expression and equitable access for all; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we support RI Bills S0238 and H5726, Freedom to Read Act, as sponsored by Senators McKenney, Bissaillon, Gallo, Gu, Lawson, Tikoian, and Britto; and House Representatives Morales, Stewart, Paplauskas, Boylan, Carson, Cotter, Ajello, Speakman, Handy, and Kislak, and ask all other representatives and governor to support it as well.

ON BEHALF OF: Westerly Writers Group and Friends

For more information, please contact: Ted Ferragut, ted.ferragut@gmail.com

SIGNATORIES

Ted Ferragut

Albert W. Clemence

Deb Vaillancourt
Paul Hellweg

Wendy Bradford

Pamela Vitale

Jean Fournier

Donna Ursillo

Suzan Hieschitz

Christina Danese

Roberta Curry

Christopher Blalco

Barbara Morgan

Laurie Meisner

TED FERRAGUT

ALBERT W. CLEMENCE

DEB VAILLANCOURT

PAUL HELLEWEG

WENDY BRADFORD

PAMELA VITALE

Jean Fournier

DONNA URSILLO

SUZAN HIESCHITZ

CHRISTINA DANESE

Roberta Curry

Christopher Blalco

Barbara Morgan

LAURIE MEISNER