



Rhode Island State Council of Churches and the Rhode Island Bible Society

Mr. Jeremy M. Langill
Executive Minister

March 21, 2024

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The Honorable Robert E. Craven
Chair, House Judiciary Committee
Rhode Island State House
Providence, RI 02903

Re: Support for H-7575

Dear Chairman Craven and Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

I am writing today in support of H-7575. The Rhode Island State Council of Churches recognizes the important role that libraries play in providing access to and promoting literacy, as well as their essential role in the support and development of our democratic norms. As such, we support efforts to protect librarians from attempts to disrupt or prevent them from carrying out their work and responsibilities.

Rhode Island, since its founding, has a long tradition of maintaining appropriate boundaries between the rights and responsibilities of the civil state and religious belief/practice. Roger Williams was keenly aware of the danger of the imposition of religious views through the apparatus of the civil state.

While religious communities are free to practice their beliefs as they see fit, and are free to advocate for their values in the context of our political process, they are not free to dictate how or what others should think.

H-7575 provides a helpful bulwark against any attempt to restrict access to knowledge or information, even if it offends a particular religious consciousness. Religious freedoms are strengthened, not weakened, by a robust civic polity.

The Rhode Island State Council of Churches urges passage of H-7575. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jeremy Langill
Executive Minister