

Dear Members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee

I am writing to urge you to oppose proposed legislation (LD 1395) that would limit access to professionally curated school library databases and digital educational resources for students and families across our state. This, and similar bills, ought not to pass.

Recent proposals in several states have sought to restrict or over-regulate school library databases based on unfounded claims that these resources contain harmful or obscene material. However, there is no credible evidence that mainstream educational databases—licensed by state agencies and vetted by certified librarians—contain content that violates federal or state obscenity laws. Most states have rejected or not passed similar bills and I hope you vote “ought not to pass.”

School library databases are an essential educational tool. They provide students with age-appropriate, academically rigorous materials that align with state and local school standards. Access is safeguarded through filtering technologies, professional curation, and compliance with federal laws like the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA). Even if a local community objected to some content, these platforms allow school districts to customize content and enable parental opt-out when needed, preserving both access and individual family choice – things Mainers value.

Legislation that restricts access based on vague concerns risks undermining access to resources (which some communities could not afford and would have to raise locally form taxes), chilling intellectual freedom, and weakening our public institutions.

Instead of limiting access, I encourage the legislature to support policies that:

- Reinforce fair and transparent content review procedures.
- Protect student access to safe, developmentally appropriate resources that are neutral in position and ideology.
- Recognize the professionalism of educators and librarians to curate materials.

Please don’t let isolated objections or political pressure compromise the quality of education, and access to high quality, curated resources for all Maine students. I respectfully ask you to stand against legislation that curtails access to school library databases.

Thank you for your service and your commitment to our students. I know it’s not an easy job!

Sincerely,

Andrew Wallace (Former school librarian and a current member of the non-partisan Maine State Library Commission)

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