

EBSCO

Information Services

April 15, 2025

The Honorable Joseph Rafferty
The Honorable Kelly Noonan Murphy
Maine Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

Re: Opposition to LD 1395

Dear Senator Rafferty and Representative Noonan Murphy, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs:

On behalf of [EBSCO Information Services](#) (EBSCO), a leading provider of library research databases and online resources, including in Maine, I write in opposition to LD 1395 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.

In Maine we provide databases directly to various universities, public libraries and schools in the state, as well as via the state library program - Digital Maine Library, which makes EBSCO resources available to Maine library patrons of academic, K-12 and public libraries.

As a leading provider of library research databases, we share concerns about minors accessing database content that is not intended or appropriate for them based on age or education level. Such concerns are the very reason why we have rigorous criteria for selecting and curating only the highest-quality, appropriate content – from trusted sources valuable for research and learning, such as magazines, periodicals, research journals, newspapers, and e-books – in our library databases. EBSCO's curation controls are the solution to ensuring databases available to minors only consist of content that is age-, developmentally, and educationally relevant.

EBSCO's content curation methods to support learning and research for K-12 students. Entail three fundamental steps to ensure the availability of content that is appropriate for K-12 students and local Maine communities.

1. We examine publications, making sure we select reputable magazines, journals, newspapers and other sources of information. Complete lists of every title in each of our databases are openly available on our website.
2. We perform an additional level of curation to remove individual articles from the selected publications that may be inappropriate for K-12 users.
3. Recognizing that each community we serve may have different ideas of what they find appropriate for students, beyond our curation, we provide options for schools or school libraries to further remove items based on the publication, author, or even a specific article.

On top of these thorough curation controls, EBSCO's databases also operate within internet filters necessary to comply with state and federal laws – such as the Children's Internet Protection Act, or CIPA

– to restrict minors’ access to inappropriate internet content; any link to an external website in our databases would be governed by the safety filters in schools and on school devices – an added layer of protection. We have these curation controls in place to ensure the safety of students within our databases.

While we agree with the premise of LD 1395 to protect students, we are concerned with the unintended consequences. We believe this bill could unintentionally drive students to the open web to research and find content for school projects and papers by restricting access to curated library research databases. This has the potential of exposing them to the very subjects and ideas that this bill is trying to protect them against —content not available in library databases in the first place. There are few avenues for curation and content controls on the open web, as compared to the “walled garden” of vetted, curated research content available on EBSCO’s databases.

EBSCO Information Services is committed to continuously improving our databases and processes to better serve and protect students. We believe that our tested curation approaches, including the tools for local community customization, directly support the intent of LD 1395, and there is no evidence Maine students access inappropriate content through our databases – a testament to the quality of the content we license, our curation controls, and our best practices.

Thank you for your time today and for supporting measures to protect the ability for students to research and learning in a supportive, appropriate environment. I’d be happy to answer any questions from the committee should you have any.

Sincerely,

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