

Cidney Mayes
Portland
LD 1395

Cidney Mayes
5th and 6th Grade Librarian
48 Cypress Street
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To the Members of the Educational and Cultural Affairs Committee,

My name is Cidney Mayes and I am a resident of Portland, Maine. I am the 5th and 6th grade librarian and Digital Literacy teacher at South Portland Middle School. I am writing to urge you to please vote ought not to pass on LD 1395.

This is a superfluous bill that seeks to address a problem that does not exist. It is another thinly veiled attempt to censor materials in our public schools and eliminate the exemption that already applies to public schools and libraries in regards to sexual content in literary, artistic, political, and scientific materials. This bill places unnecessary stress on our schools teachers and librarians, and is all too similar to several other bills that have failed in committee in the past few years (e.g. LD 123, LD 618, and LD 1008).

Our school library databases are are-appropriate, and content is already filtered by our school districts, and most Maine schools who receive e-rate funding must already have extra filtering to comply with CIPA regulation. Furthermore, LD 1395 has language about the teaching of “instructional modules on the prevention and recognition of signs of sexual abuse, sexual exploitation of a minor and human trafficking” and there is no clear connection between these two parts of the bill. There are conflicting messages about wanting to teach about these topics, and yet prohibiting access to reliable information about these issues in our school library databases - which, again, are already made appropriate for the students who are accessing those materials. Our school libraries use databases that further the educational goals of our students, and this legislation will place unnecessary barriers to access to information, widening to the digital divide and placing students furthest from opportunity at an even greater disadvantage.

Again, I urge you to vote ought not to pass on LD 1395. This bill is unnecessary, and there are filters and processes in place to protect our children from harmful content in our public schools and libraries.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Cidney Mayes