

Testimony for LD 1395

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To the Members of the Educational and Cultural Affairs Committee,

My name is Leanne Oren and I am a resident of Raymond, Maine. I have been a high school librarian for seven years. I am writing to urge you to please vote ought not to pass on LD 1395.

By law (CIPA), schools that participate in the e-rate funding are already required to have filters in place to prevent student access to inappropriate content. I previously provided testimony to similar bills (LD 123, LD 618, and LD 1008) that were written in an attempt to censor educational information. In that testimony, I discussed how “The Miller Test was created through United States Supreme Court Case Law, which demands that materials be looked at as a whole, not out of context. Materials are not categorized as obscene, if they provide educational value. If the community believes a resource was incorrectly purchased, our school has a Reconsideration Policy that reviews individual texts in question.” LD 1395 seeks to solve a problem that does not exist. However, it is another chance for organized groups to try to take choice from school districts who already vet databases for their curriculum needs. To censor an entire database simply because these organizations do not like the ideas presented or it does not align with their political beliefs limits students’ first amendment rights. The library is a place of voluntary learning and education. Parents who have issues with materials in schools should address their concerns at an individual level, and not have their choice taken away by the State Government.

The secondary focus of this bill concerning “instructional modules on the prevention and recognition of signs of sexual abuse, sexual exploitation of a minor and human trafficking” is a separate issue from databases in the library. It makes one question why part of the bill is asked to censor information from reputable resources and ask educators to teach a sensitive issue at the same time.

Please vote ought not to pass on LD 1395 and protect credible resources for teachers and students.

Leanne Oren,
Raymond, Maine