



Connecticut Education Association

Capitol Place, Suite 500
21 Oak Street, Hartford, CT 06106
860-525-5641 | cea.org

Governance

Kate Dias, President
Joslyn DeLancey, Vice President
Tara Flaherty, Secretary
Stephanie Wanzer, Treasurer

Executive Director

Todd Jaeck

Testimony of

Kate Dias

Connecticut Education Association President

&

Joslyn DeLancey

Connecticut Education Association Vice President

Before the

Committee on Children

Re:

SB 1271 An Act Concerning School and Public Libraries.

February 13, 2025

Good afternoon, Senator Maher, Representative Paris, Senator Martin, Representative Dauphinais, and distinguished members of the Committee on Children.

The Connecticut Education Association (CEA) is the state's largest association of certified public school teachers, representing over 40,000 active and retired teachers from 160 school districts across Connecticut. CEA works to improve the lives of our teachers, the success of our students, and the quality of public education in our state.

We thank the Children's Committee for raising SB 1271 and for working to protect our students' right to learn, as well as our educators' freedom to teach. SB 1271 takes a crucial step in ensuring accountability for local governing bodies and safeguarding educators' and librarians' ability to provide a diverse and comprehensive curriculum that prepares students for the complexities of an interconnected world.

The freedom to read and explore a wide range of ideas is fundamental to a quality education and the development of students' critical thinking skills. Book bans undermine this by restricting access to materials that encourage students to engage with diverse perspectives and think critically about the world and their place in it. These bans often target topics essential to student success—such as history, identity, and social issues—while depriving them of the opportunity to navigate these subjects in a safe, educational environment like our libraries. Limiting access to these materials not only restricts intellectual growth, it also weakens students' preparation for civic life and their ability to engage in thoughtful discourse.

This is why our educators, librarians, and media specialists play such a crucial role in selecting reading materials with purpose and careful consideration. As trained professionals, they ensure that books and resources align with students' interests, age, and maturity while fostering intellectual and personal growth. SB 1271 acknowledges the expertise of these professionals and provides essential protections, allowing them to continue guiding students in exploring complex ideas critically and respectfully.

SB 1271 achieves all this while still allowing for local direction and accountability. It does this by involving local governing bodies in the development of policies on collection development and maintenance, library programming and displays, and the review and reconsideration of library materials. By establishing a clear process for decision-making, this bill ensures that library and curriculum policies are transparent, well-informed, and reflective of educational best practices.

We urge the committee to support SB 1271 to uphold the integrity of our educational institutions, protect students' freedom to read, and recognize the expertise of our educators and librarians. Thank you for your time and consideration.