



STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
KA 'OIHANA HO'ONA'AUAO  
P.O. BOX 2360  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96804

**Date:** 02/10/2025

**Time:** 03:02 PM

**Location:** CR 229 & Videoconference

**Committee:** Senate Education

**Department:** Education

**Person Testifying:** Keith T. Hayashi, Superintendent of Education

**Bill Title:** SB 0799 RELATING TO THE FREEDOM TO READ.

**Purpose of Bill:** Requires the Department of Education to select materials for inclusion, circulation, and exclusion in school library collections according to certain criteria. Requires the Department of Education to uphold the freedom to read. Prohibits the Department of Education from excluding books based on certain criteria. Requires the State Librarian to select materials for inclusion, circulation, and exclusion in school library collections according to certain criteria. Requires the State Librarian to uphold the freedom to read. Prohibits the State Librarian from excluding books based on certain criteria.

**Department's Position:**

The Hawaii State Department of Education (Department) supports the intent of SB 799 and respectfully offers comments.

Currently, 28% of public schools in Hawai'i have a certified school librarian overseeing their library collections. Given the limited number of certified librarians with professional training in collection development, the Department respectfully recommends amending Section 302A- (a) (page 3, lines 15 - 21) by deleting the text in brackets and replacing it with the text underlined.

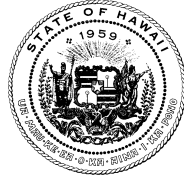
*"The Department shall select materials for inclusion, circulation, and exclusion in school library collections according [~~to the professional judgment of the selectors regarding the material's value to the library's collection~~] to the Department's school library materials selection guidelines. Selection shall be for students from grades kindergarten through twelve in accordance [~~with professionally accepted guidelines~~] with the Department's school library materials selection guidelines that are aligned with professionally accepted guidelines, and shall be based on awareness of community interests and concerns..."*

This revision ensures that all school staff, including non-certified librarians, have access to clear, standardized

guidelines specific to school library collections. Establishing a clear framework for material selection will support consistency and transparency across all public schools, ensuring that library collections reflect educational and developmental needs while maintaining professional standards.

Additionally, the description of SB 799 states, "Requires the State Librarian to select materials for inclusion, circulation, and exclusion in school library collections according to certain criteria." The Department believes this sentence was intended to be: "Requires the State Librarian to select materials for inclusion, circulation, and inclusion in [~~school~~] public library collections according to certain criteria."

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on SB 799.



STATE OF HAWAII  
HAWAII STATE PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM  
'OIHANA HALE WAIHONA PUKE AUPUNI O KA MOKU'ĀINA O HAWAII  
OFFICE OF THE STATE LIBRARIAN  
44 MERCHANT STREET  
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96813

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

**Monday, February 10, 2025**

**3:02 pm**

**Conference Room 229**

**By Stacey A. Aldrich  
State Librarian**

**S.B. 799 RELATING TO THE FREEDOM TO READ**

To: Sen. Michelle N. Kidani, Chair  
Sen. Donna Mercado Kim, Vice Chair  
Members of the Senate Committee on Education

The Hawai'i State Public Library System (HSPLS) **supports S.B. 799**, which, among other things, requires the State Librarian to uphold the freedom to read and prohibits the State Librarian from excluding books based on certain criteria, respectfully offers **a proposed amendment** and **a clarification of the bill's description**.

S.B. 799 is consistent with the HSPLS collection development policy, which is posted on the HSPLS website under "Policies" (<https://www.librarieshawaii.org/about-us/policies/board-of-education-policies/collection-development-policy/>).

The mission of the Hawai'i State Public Library System is to inspire curiosity and create opportunities for all to read, learn, and connect. In accordance with this mission, the library selects materials in a variety of formats and languages to serve the needs of the community and to provide a broad and relevant collection. As the only statewide public library system in the nation, HSPLS is responsible for providing equitable access to all library users and ensuring that our collections reflect the diversity of the State of Hawai'i.

We respectfully request an **amendment** to align the intent of this bill with HSPLS operations. We recommend replacing the word "circulation" with the phrase "the collection," as follows:

SECTION THREE (c) The state librarian and state library system librarians shall uphold the concept of the freedom to read. No books or other materials shall be excluded or removed from ~~circulation~~ the collection because of the race, nationality, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or political or social views of the author, or due to partisan, ideological, or religious disapproval. Selection of materials shall not be construed to imply agreement with, approval or endorsement of the content, viewpoint, implication, or expression of the book or other material."

In addition, we'd like to clarify that the State Librarian does not select materials for school library collections and request that the sentence indicated below be removed from the bill's description.

**Description:**

Requires the Department of Education to select materials for inclusion, circulation, and exclusion in school library collections according to certain criteria. Requires the Department of Education to uphold the freedom to read. Prohibits the Department of Education from excluding books based on certain criteria. ~~Requires the State Librarian to select materials for inclusion, circulation, and exclusion in school library collections according to certain criteria.~~ Requires the State Librarian to uphold the freedom to read. Prohibits the State Librarian from excluding books based on certain criteria.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on this measure.

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 7:33:09 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
SAVANAH MENDIOLA	Individual	Oppose	In Person

Comments:

I oppose this bill to be passed regarding the literatures in community serculation. These literatures have no business in or around our children's lives. How is it ok for these literatures to be obtained by children 5 and up but pornography to be illegal?

Yes, there are lifestyles that our in our communities but its not from freedom of being individuals, most of these individuals are this way of life because of past trauma, choices pushed on them. I as one these individuals I will be present to stand against these literatures for the safety of the next generations to come.

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 9:18:07 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Tara Malia Gregory	Individual	Oppose	In Person

Comments:

Aloha Kakou, I am Tara Malia Gregory, and I oppose SB 799.

This bill introduces AGE INAPPROPRIATE content to our keiki resulting in emotional, social, and psychological damage.



TESTIMONY  
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION  
SB799 RELATING TO THE FREEDOM TO READ  
Monday, February 10, 2025, at 3:02 PM, State Capitol CR 229

Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Mercado Kim and Committee Members,

The Hawaiian Islands Republican Women supports the protection of our freedoms of religion, speech, press, assembly, and petition in accordance with the first amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

We stand in STRONG OPPOSITION to SB799 for the following reasons:

1. Violation of parental rights according to the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment:  
Fourteenth Amendment, Section 1:

All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws.

2. Children's brains are not fully developed according to multiple peer reviewed medical, behavioral health, and education professional publications. The human brain is not fully developed until age 25. Children in kindergarten through twelfth grade lack the capacity to make independent decisions related to their well-being. They require the guidance of the parent/guardian.
3. Legislative hypocrisy: During HB1118 hearing before the House Committee on Health, we were gaslit to believe that our first amendment right to religious freedom is null and void and to give authority to the State Director of Health to mandate vaccines for school aged children regardless of the religious freedom. Today, we are being told by this legislative body to accept SB799 based on the first amendment. This is hypocrisy.

**Suggested Solution and Recommended Amendment:** SB799 (pages 3-4)

SECTION 2. Chapter 302A, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is amended by adding a new subpart to part II to be appropriately designated and to read as follows:

" . School Libraries §302A- Selection and acquisition of library books; freedom to read.

- (a) The department shall select materials for inclusion, circulation, and exclusion in school library collections according to the professional judgment of the selectors regarding the material's value to the library's collection. Selection shall be for students from grades, kindergarten through twelve in accordance with professionally accepted guidelines and

shall be based on awareness of community interests and concerns, local, national and international issues and events, publishing trends, new insights, and societal trends, and provide a broad and relevant collection that reflects the diversity of the State.

**Recommended Amendment:**

**(a)(1). Access to library books and materials that contain pornography, gender theory, critical race theory, and queer theory shall be subject to parent/guardian permission.**

**Executive Orders:**

May I respectfully remind our Legislators that a recent Executive Order titled, “Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government” will impact Federal funding at the State Level.

(g) Federal funds shall not be used to promote gender ideology. Each agency shall assess grant conditions and grantee preferences and ensure grant funds do not promote gender ideology.

(c) Each agency head shall promptly rescind all guidance documents inconsistent with the requirements of this order or the Attorney General’s guidance issued pursuant to this order or rescind such parts of such documents that are inconsistent in such manner. Such documents include, but are not limited to:

- (i) “The White House Toolkit on Transgender Equality”;
- (ii) the Department of Education’s guidance documents including:
  - (A) “2024 Title IX Regulations: Pointers for Implementation” (July 2024);
  - (B) “U.S. Department of Education Toolkit: Creating Inclusive and Nondiscriminatory School Environments for LGBTQI+ Students”;
  - (C) “U.S. Department of Education Supporting LGBTQI+ Youth and Families in School” (June 21, 2023)

Please vote NO on SB 799. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully submitted,

Jamie Detwiler, President  
Hawaiian Islands Republican Women





## **Advocating for the Hawai'i LGBTQIA+ Community**

February 7, 2025

Senate Committee on Education  
Hawai'i State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Hearing: Monday, February 10, 2025, at 3:02 PM

### **RE: Strong Support for Senate Bill 799**

Aloha Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and committee members,

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 799 on behalf of the Hawai'i State Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer Plus. (LGBTQ+) Commission, which was established by the 2022 Hawai'i State Legislature with the following purpose:

“...to improve the State's interface with members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, plus community; identify the short- and long-range needs of its members; and ensure that there is an effective means of researching, planning, and advocating for the equity of this population in all aspects of state government.”

The Hawai'i State LGBTQ+ Commission strongly supports Senate Bill 799, which reaffirms the fundamental principles of intellectual freedom and the right of all students to access diverse and inclusive educational materials in our public schools and libraries. This bill ensures that the Department of Education (DOE) and the State Librarian select and maintain library materials based on clear and objective criteria, upholding the freedom to read while preventing the exclusion of books based on discriminatory grounds.

SB 799 is essential in safeguarding the intellectual and educational rights of Hawai'i's keiki and adults. In recent years, we have seen an alarming rise in efforts to censor literature, particularly books that explore LGBTQIA+ themes, racial justice, and other diverse perspectives. Such actions not only infringe upon First Amendment rights but also deprive students of the opportunity to learn about different cultures, identities, and experiences that reflect the rich diversity of our state. This bill sends a clear message that Hawai'i values education, inclusion, and the free exchange of ideas.

Furthermore, we respectfully request two (2) amendments in section 2 to SB 799 to explicitly include “gender identity and/or expression” among the protected classes to ensure that materials representing transgender and gender-nonconforming individuals are not subject to exclusion. Including this language would strengthen the bill's intent and reinforce Hawai'i's commitment to fostering a learning environment where all students feel seen, respected, and affirmed.

## HI State LGBTQ+ Commission Testimony in Strong Support of SB 799

By passing SB 799 with the requested amendments, the Legislature will affirm its dedication to academic integrity, diversity, and the fundamental freedoms that form the foundation of an equitable society. We urge the committee to advance this bill with the proposed amendment and uphold the right of all students to access a comprehensive and inclusive library collection.

Should you or any member of your staff have any questions regarding this testimony you can reach the Hawai'i State LGBTQ+ Commission at [hawaiistatelgbtqpluscommission@gmail.com](mailto:hawaiistatelgbtqpluscommission@gmail.com).

Mahalo nui loa for your time and consideration,

Michael Golojuch, Jr. (he/him)  
Vice-Chair  
[Hawai'i State LGBTQ+ Commission](#)

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### Amendment #1

#### **§302A- Selection and acquisition of library books; freedom to read.**

(b) The department shall uphold the concept of the freedom to read. No books or other materials shall be excluded or removed from circulation because of the race, nationality, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression, or political or social views of the author, or due to partisan, ideological, or religious disapproval. Selection of materials shall not be construed to imply agreement with, approval or endorsement of the content, viewpoint, implication, or expression of the book or other material."

### Amendment #2

#### **§312-3.9 Selection and acquisition of library books; freedom to read.**

(c) The state librarian and state library system librarians shall uphold the concept of the freedom to read. No books or other materials shall be excluded or removed from circulation because of the race, nationality, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression, or political or social views of the author, or due to partisan, ideological, or religious disapproval. Selection of materials shall not be construed to imply agreement with, approval or endorsement of the content, viewpoint, implication, or expression of the book or other material."

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 2:59:27 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mary Healy	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

I oppose this bill. I will give oral testimony via zoom.

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:23:26 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Rami Donahoe	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

The children have so much to recover from: covid learning style, self-esteem, suicidal ideations, belonging, social media and you want to put books in the library- which is almost dead-that will confuse them?

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 10:29:43 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Carolyn Martinez-Golojuch, MSW	Testifying for Rainbow Family 808	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kidani, and Members of the Committees,

My name is Carolyn Martinez-Golojuch, and I am here today as a mother, and a long-time civil rights activist with a Master’s degree in Social Work. I am submitting this testimony in strong support of Senate Bill 799, which ensures the Department of Education and the State Librarian uphold the freedom to read and establish clear, non-discriminatory criteria for the inclusion, circulation, and exclusion of materials in school libraries.

As a mother, I deeply value the importance of diverse, well-rounded education for my children and all students across our state. Libraries play a critical role in fostering literacy, critical thinking, and empathy by exposing students to a variety of perspectives, cultures, and lived experiences. Censorship and the arbitrary exclusion of books undermine these fundamental educational principles and deprive students of their right to access information.

As a social worker, I have seen firsthand how representation in literature impacts the well-being and development of young minds. Many students—particularly those from historically marginalized communities—find comfort, validation, and empowerment through books that reflect their identities, struggles, and aspirations. Ensuring that our school libraries provide a broad selection of literature fosters inclusion, acceptance, and understanding among students of all backgrounds.

Senate Bill 799 establishes a framework that protects intellectual freedom while ensuring that book selection is based on educational value, accuracy, and appropriateness rather than political or ideological motivations. It is vital that decisions about school library materials be guided by professional standards rather than external pressures that seek to limit what students can and cannot read.

Furthermore, restricting access to books does not shield children from challenging topics; rather, it leaves them ill-equipped to engage thoughtfully with the world around them. When students encounter difficult or controversial subjects in a safe and educational setting, guided by educators and librarians, they develop critical thinking skills that are essential for their success in a diverse and democratic society.

I urge this committee to stand firmly in support of students' right to read and educators’ ability to provide diverse, enriching educational resources. Passing Senate Bill 799 ensures that our school

libraries remain places of knowledge, discovery, and inclusivity for all students.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify. I respectfully urge you to support this important legislation.

Carolyn Martinez-Golojuch, MSW  
President and Founder  
Rainbow Family 808

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 2:15:21 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Dean Hamer	Testifying for Qwaves Media	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and members of the Committee,

I am writing in **strong support of SB799**, which upholds the concept of the fundamental freedom to read. This legislation is needed to ensure that children and adults in Hawai‘i continue to have access to fundamental information about our home and the world around us and are exposed to a diversity of views and perspectives essential for critical thinking.

While book banning has not yet been a serious problem in Hawai‘i, it is a practice that is rapidly growing in other parts of the United States, and the practitioners of such censorship are increasingly aggressive in spreading prejudice even to progressive parts of the country like Hawai‘i nei.

I speak from real life experience. I recently co-authored a children’s book based on the traditional mo‘olelo of Kapaemahu. It’s a great tool for teaching about Hawaiian history and culture, was featured by the Kaneaokana educational network, and won many awards. I was not surprised when the book was banned in Virginia – after all, that’s in the American South. But I was shocked and disappointed that even here in Hawai‘i, it was prevented from being included in a list of books for a reading program sponsored by our public education system because it “might be controversial.” The book was not actually banned (it’s in 59 public libraries), but the mere fact that the DOE was afraid to use the book peaks to the extraordinary chilling effect that censorship can have even on the best intentioned educators.

I urge the Legislature to pass SB799 to protect our fundamental right to read. Attempts to censor books ARE coming to Hawai‘i, and it’s best to be prepared.



## HAWAI`I YOUTH SERVICES NETWORK

677 Ala Moana Blvd., Suite 904

Honolulu, Hawai`i 96813

Phone: (808) 489-9549

Web site: <http://www.hysn.org> E-mail: [info@hysn.org](mailto:info@hysn.org)

Vonnell Ramos, President  
Cyd Hoffeld, Vice President  
Sione Ford Naeata, Treasurer  
Greg Tjapkes, Secretary

Judith F. Clark, Executive  
Director  
*Network Membership*

*Access to Independence*  
*Big Brothers Big Sisters Hawai`i*  
*Bobby Benson Center*  
*Child and Family Service*  
*Coalition for a Drug-Free Hawai`i*  
*Domestic Violence Action Center*  
*EPIC `Ohana, Inc.*  
*Friends of the Children's Justice*  
*Center of Maui*  
*Get Ready Hawai`i*  
*Hale Kipa, Inc.*  
*Hale `Opio Kaua`i, Inc.*  
*Hawai`i Children's Action*  
*Network*  
*Hawai`i Health & Harm*  
*Reduction Center*  
*Hawaii Island Community`*  
*Health Center*  
*Ho`ola Na Pua*  
*Ho`okele Coalition of Kaua`i*  
*Ka Hale Pomaika`i*  
*Kokua Kalihi Valley*  
*Kaua`i Planning and Action*  
*Alliance*  
*Lines for Life Youth Line*  
*Maui Youth and Family Services*  
*Na Pu`uwai Molokai Native*  
*Hawaiian Health Care*  
*Systems*  
*P.A.R.E.N.T.S., Inc.*  
*Parents and Children Together*  
*PHOCUSED*  
*Piha Wellness and Healing*  
*Planned Parenthood of the*  
*Great Northwest, Hawaii*  
*Alaska, Kentucky, Indiana*  
*Residential Youth Services*  
*& Empowerment (RYSE)*  
*Salvation Army Family*  
*Intervention Services*  
*Sex Abuse Treatment Center*  
*Susannah Wesley Community*  
*Center*  
*The Catalyst Group*

February 7, 2025

To: Senator Michelle Kidani, Chair  
And member of the Committee on Education

### **TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 799 RELATING TO** **FREEDOM TO READ**

Hawaii Youth Services Network (HYSN), a statewide coalition of youth-serving organizations, supports SB 799 Relating to Freedom to Read.

HYSN is opposed to banning books because:

- **Free speech:** Book banning limits access to information and discourages free thought, which goes against the principles of democracy.
- **Individual choice:** People should be able to make their own decisions about what they read.
- **Representation:** Books help people understand the world and their place in it, and they should reflect the diversity of society.
- **Critical thinking:** Reading helps people learn to think for themselves and understand complex issues.
- **Tolerance:** Book banning can endanger tolerance and free expression.
- **Censorship:** Book banning is a slippery slope to government censorship.
- **Education:** Reading is essential to learning and developing empathy and social-emotional skills.
- **Personal growth:** Books help people grow into adults who can think for themselves and understand different perspectives.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

Judith F. Clark, MPH  
Executive Director





To: Senate Committee on Education  
Hearing Date/Time: February 10, 2025 3:02PM  
Place: Hawaii State Capitol, Room 229  
Re: Testimony in STRONG SUPPORT of SB799

Dear Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and the Members of Committee,

Members of AAUW of Hawai'i thank you for this opportunity to testify in strong support of SB799 which would require the Department of Education and State Librarian to 1) select materials for inclusion, circulation, and exclusion in school library collections, 2) uphold the freedom to read, 3) prohibit excluding books based on certain criteria.

Equal access to quality education is essential to advancing "equity for all", AAUW's vision. Intellectual freedom and equitable access to knowledge and information is critical for quality education. We believe all keiki in public education should have access to inclusive reading materials outside of textbooks.

Please pass this important measure and thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Younghee Overly  
AAUW of Hawai'i Public Policy Committee

*The American Association of University Women (AAUW) of Hawai'i is an all-volunteer, statewide chapter of a national organization and is made up of six branches: Hilo, Honolulu, Kaula'i, Kona, Maui, and Windward O'ahu. AAUW's mission is to advance gender equity through research, education, and advocacy. Our goal is economic security for women in Hawai'i .*



## **SENATE BILL 799, RELATING TO THE FREEDOM TO READ**

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2025 · EDU HEARING

**POSITION:** Support.

**RATIONALE:** The Democratic Party of Hawai'i Education Caucus **supports** SB 799, relating to the freedom to read, which requires the Department of Education to select materials for inclusion, circulation, and exclusion in school library collections according to certain criteria; requires the Department of Education to uphold the freedom to read; prohibits the Department of Education from excluding books based on certain criteria; requires the State Librarian to select materials for inclusion, circulation, and exclusion in school library collections according to certain criteria. Requires the State Librarian to uphold the freedom to read; and prohibits the State Librarian from excluding books based on certain criteria.

Access to information is essential to children's learning and a vibrant democracy. According to the American Library Association, over 4,200 works in school and public libraries in the United States were targeted for censorship in 2023, a significant increase from the 2022 record of almost 2,600 books. During the first eight months of 2024, 1,128 books were challenged. These book ban efforts come largely from socially conservative organizations and most frequently target works about racial history, the LGBTQ+ community, or other minorities.

Moreover, according to the American Library Association's Office for Intellectual Freedom, between January 1 and August 31 of 2023, there were 695 attempts to censor library materials

and services and documented challenges to 1,915 unique titles. This represented a 20 percent increase from the same reporting period in 2022, which saw the highest number of book challenges since the American Library Association began compiling the data more than twenty years ago. Numerous states have introduced or passed legislation to censor literature in libraries and public school systems.

In response, other states—including California, Colorado, Illinois, Maryland, Minnesota, New Jersey, Vermont, and Washington—have adopted measures blocking extremist efforts to censor books and discriminate against racial, sexual, and gender minorities. Resolutions have been introduced in Congress raising concerns about the banning of books and censorship, as the preamble to this measure states, such as S. Res. 857, 118th Cong. (2nd Sess. 2024), which urges local governments and school districts "to protect the rights of students to learn and the ability of educators and librarians to teach, including by providing students with the opportunity to read a wide array of books reflecting the full breadth and diversity of viewpoints and perspectives."

Censorship is fundamentally anti-democratic. Our keiki deserve robust access to a diverse array of information and ideas, so they can become critical thinkers and problem-solvers that drive our society forward in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

**Contact: [educationcaucusdph@gmail.com](mailto:educationcaucusdph@gmail.com)**



**TESTIMONY FROM THE STONEWALL CAUCUS OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF HAWAII**

**HEARING BEFORE SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

**FEBRUARY 10, 2025**

**Testimony in Strong Support of Senate Bill [799] RELATING TO THE FREEDOM TO READ**

Aloha Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim and esteemed Members of the Committee:

My name is Abby Simmons, Chair of the Stonewall Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i, and I am testifying on behalf of our Caucus in **strong support of SB799**, which upholds the freedom to read in Hawai'i's public and school libraries. This bill is a vital step in ensuring that our communities—especially students—have access to a broad range of literature that reflects diverse perspectives, cultures, and lived experiences.

Libraries are cornerstones of democracy. They provide equitable access to knowledge, encourage critical thinking, and help young readers develop empathy and understanding. The recent rise in book bans across the country—many targeting works by authors from marginalized communities—threatens intellectual freedom and our commitment to inclusivity. Hawai'i must take proactive steps to ensure that decisions about library materials are based on educational and literary value, rather than political, religious, or ideological pressures.

**Request for Amendment:**

**While this bill rightly prohibits the exclusion or removal of books based on an author's race, nationality, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or political/social views, we respectfully request an amendment to explicitly add "gender identity and expression" to this list.**

Why is this addition necessary?

- Gender identity and expression are distinct from sexual orientation and deserve explicit recognition to prevent ambiguity in enforcement.

**Stonewall Caucus Testimony in Strong Support of Senate Bill [799] Relating to the Freedom to Read**

- Books featuring transgender and nonbinary characters or authors have been disproportionately targeted for bans in recent years. Protecting these works ensures all young readers see themselves represented in literature.
- Including gender identity and expression aligns this bill with Hawai'i's long-standing commitment to diversity and inclusion.

By passing SB 799 with this amendment, the Legislature will affirm Hawai'i's role as a leader in protecting intellectual freedom and ensuring that all readers—regardless of their background or identity—can access the full spectrum of human knowledge and experience.

We respectfully urge the committee to pass SB 799 with the proposed amendment.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Abby Simmons (she/her)  
Chair & SCC Representative  
Stonewall Caucus  
Democratic Party of Hawai'i  
<https://linktr.ee/stonewalldph>



## Advocating for the Hawai'i LGBTQIA+ Community

February 7, 2025

Senate Committee on Education  
Hawai'i State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street  
Honolulu, HI 96813

Hearing: Monday, February 10, 2025, at 3:02 PM

### RE: **Strong Support for Senate Bill 799**

Aloha Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and committee members,

I am writing in strong support of Senate Bill 799 on behalf of the Hawai'i State Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer Plus. (LGBTQ+) Commission, which was established by the 2022 Hawai'i State Legislature with the following purpose:

“...to improve the State's interface with members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, plus community; identify the short- and long-range needs of its members; and ensure that there is an effective means of researching, planning, and advocating for the equity of this population in all aspects of state government.”

The Hawai'i State LGBTQ+ Commission strongly supports Senate Bill 799, which reaffirms the fundamental principles of intellectual freedom and the right of all students to access diverse and inclusive educational materials in our public schools and libraries. This bill ensures that the Department of Education (DOE) and the State Librarian select and maintain library materials based on clear and objective criteria, upholding the freedom to read while preventing the exclusion of books based on discriminatory grounds.

SB 799 is essential in safeguarding the intellectual and educational rights of Hawai'i's keiki and adults. In recent years, we have seen an alarming rise in efforts to censor literature, particularly books that explore LGBTQIA+ themes, racial justice, and other diverse perspectives. Such actions not only infringe upon First Amendment rights but also deprive students of the opportunity to learn about different cultures, identities, and experiences that reflect the rich diversity of our state. This bill sends a clear message that Hawai'i values education, inclusion, and the free exchange of ideas.

Furthermore, we respectfully request two (2) amendments in section 2 to SB 799 to explicitly include “gender identity and/or expression” among the protected classes to ensure that materials representing transgender and gender-nonconforming individuals are not subject to exclusion. Including this language would strengthen the bill's intent and reinforce Hawai'i's commitment to fostering a learning environment where all students feel seen, respected, and affirmed.

## HI State LGBTQ+ Commission Testimony in Strong Support of SB 799

By passing SB 799 with the requested amendments, the Legislature will affirm its dedication to academic integrity, diversity, and the fundamental freedoms that form the foundation of an equitable society. We urge the committee to advance this bill with the proposed amendment and uphold the right of all students to access a comprehensive and inclusive library collection.

Should you or any member of your staff have any questions regarding this testimony you can reach the Hawai'i State LGBTQ+ Commission at [hawaiiistatelgbtqpluscommission@gmail.com](mailto:hawaiiistatelgbtqpluscommission@gmail.com).

Mahalo nui loa for your time and consideration,

Michael Golojuch, Jr. (he/him)  
Vice-Chair  
[Hawai'i State LGBTQ+ Commission](#)

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### Amendment #1

#### **§302A- Selection and acquisition of library books; freedom to read.**

(b) The department shall uphold the concept of the freedom to read. No books or other materials shall be excluded or removed from circulation because of the race, nationality, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression, or political or social views of the author, or due to partisan, ideological, or religious disapproval. Selection of materials shall not be construed to imply agreement with, approval or endorsement of the content, viewpoint, implication, or expression of the book or other material."

### Amendment #2

#### **§312-3.9 Selection and acquisition of library books; freedom to read.**

(c) The state librarian and state library system librarians shall uphold the concept of the freedom to read. No books or other materials shall be excluded or removed from circulation because of the race, nationality, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and/or expression, or political or social views of the author, or due to partisan, ideological, or religious disapproval. Selection of materials shall not be construed to imply agreement with, approval or endorsement of the content, viewpoint, implication, or expression of the book or other material."



Dear Members of the Legislature,

I am writing to express strong **opposition to S.B. No. 799**, "Relating to the Freedom to Read" currently under consideration. While I wholeheartedly agree that the freedom to read is essential, Americans already have "the freedom to read". This is not what's at stake. And to frame it this way is deceitful. Families pay for these programs and should have the ability to raise ANY issue with the Department of Education. There should be a transparent and constant flow of communication with parents over their children's education.

The statistics mentioned in the bill itself are sad. The fact that over four thousand works in school and public libraries were targeted in 2023 and 1,128 books were challenged in the first eight months of 2024 should be a scathing rebuke to the current selection and handling of materials. Instead of addressing parental concerns, the bill attempts to bypass them by unilaterally dictating what materials are presented according to "certain criteria" which is not defined even a little bit.

We must ensure that the rights of parents to guide their children's education according to their religious beliefs and ideological philosophies are fully respected and protected. Vague language opens the door to misuse and misinterpretation of what materials are deemed suitable for our youth.

While promoting diverse viewpoints and perspectives is crucial, we must also acknowledge the importance of recognizing the individual needs of parents and families. The current language in the bill infringes upon these fundamental rights.

**I urge you to oppose S.B. No. 799.**

In Truth & Liberty,

Abbra Green  
Executive Secretary  
The Libertarian Party of Hawaii





February 9, 2025

Chair Michelle Kidani,  
Senate Committee on Education  
Hawai'i State Capitol  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

RE: SB799, Hearing of February 10, 2025  
Relating to the Freedom to Read

Aloha Chair Kidani, and Committee,

Friends of the Library of Hawai'i **strongly supports** SB799. This bill reinforces the policies and procedures that are already in place to maintain our excellent statewide public library services. Friends of the Library of Hawai'i supports the fantastic, professional staff at our public libraries in their work to maintain appropriate library collections. Friends of the Library of Hawai'i firmly opposes book bans, as described in this bill.

In order to have a strong public library system we need to have outstanding library staff and a commitment to the freedom of knowledge and expression. Friends of the Library of Hawai'i supports access for ALL to read, learn, and connect at our public libraries.

The Hawai'i State Public Library System is staffed by dedicated librarians and staff who are members of our community. The library staff are members of our 'ohana, our friends, our neighbors, and they are trusted professionals. Librarians in our public library system hold Master's degrees in Library and Information Science, giving them the education and training to fulfill their responsibilities.

Public libraries provide free access to lifelong learning, technology, entertainment, and much more for EVERYONE. Friends of the Library of Hawai'i supports legislation that strengthens these essential services. Established in 1879, our mission is to support and promote public library services in Hawai'i.

Sincerely,

Nainoa Mau  
Executive Director

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 1:35:23 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Nancy D Moser	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

In STRONG SUPPORT of SB 799.  
Aloha Chair and members of the Committee,  
Please vote YES on this measure.  
Nancy Moser in Waikoloa on Hawai'i Island

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 1:40:11 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mecca Monson-Gere	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

How did we get here? How can we expect our children to do better than us if we are white washing the mistakes of our past, or too afraid to share them? Please support SB799, ensuring all voices are heard, all histories are told, and there are no gatekeepers to truth.

Mahalo,

Mecca Monson-Gere

February 7, 2025

To: Senator Michelle Kidani, Chair  
And member of the Committee on Education

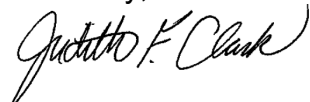
**TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF SB 799 RELATING TO FREEDOM TO READ**

Children and youth need access to books that reflect their ethnicity, culture, gender, and life experiences. At the same time, they need to learn about people and cultures that are different from theirs.

Schools and libraries should not cater to narrow-minded, intolerant persons who are not willing to consider views that differ from theirs. Book choices should be based on literary merit and their contributions to understanding the world in which we live.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Judith F. Clark". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "J".

Judith F. Clark, MPH  
48-218 Kamehameha Hwy  
Kaneohe HI 96744

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 3:59:14 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
cheryl burghardt	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha

I strongly SUPPORT SB 799 which requires the Department of Education to select materials for inclusion, circulation, and exclusion in school library collections according to certain criteria. Requires the Department of Education to uphold the freedom to read. Prohibits the Department of Education from excluding books based on certain criteria. Requires the State Librarian to select materials for inclusion, circulation, and exclusion in school library collections according to certain criteria. Requires the State Librarian to uphold the freedom to read. Prohibits the State Librarian from excluding books based on certain criteria.

As a retired elementary educator and lifelong book reader, I am pleased to see that our legislature will put forth this bill to uphold the freedom to read. What it means to me is that everyone has the opportunity to choose reading materials or to not choose them. We are extremely blessed to have an extensive system of libraries on our islands for our communities. Librarians are trained and knowledgeable about the materials and resources in their libraries. This bill will give the librarians and library staff some foundation for those times when challenges arise. This bill receives my support.

C. Burghardt

Kou, Oahu

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 9:34:16 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
kamakani de dely	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

i oppose this bill

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 9:34:49 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Mallory De Dely	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

i oppose this bill

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 9:35:30 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Susan Dedely	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

i oppose this bill



**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 9:44:00 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
camil Buentello	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

i oppose this nasty bill which includes pornography and lqbtq books being allowed to be read in school. They are kids who shouldn't be exposed to evil disgusting deeds. It's funny how you guys are trying to use our constitutional rights to pass this bill yet you didn't think about that with the HB118 bill. This government is so corrupt and horrifying that you would allow nasty perverse books to visualize sexual scenes and talk within books and being read by kids! Just mortifying. Take a look at yourselves would you want your kids to see and read that it's so nasty. Pilau government.

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 9:52:27 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Deven English	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in strong opposition of this sick bill, there is absolutely no reason that any child to be subjected to this type of sexualized behavior. This is why our education system is broken, because actions like this take precedence over standard education, math and reading is the bread and butter of this all. Stop indoctrinating our children with this nonsense.

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 10:06:19 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kealohi Hanohano	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose!!! 🚫

The people who introduced these bills are sick fucks.

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/7/2025 10:10:39 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Krista Vessell	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

ABSOLUTELY UNEQUIVOCALLY FULLY OPPOSE THIS HOSTILE PIECE OF LEGISLATION. After speaking with a librarian at Washington Middle School who confirmed that SHE HERSELF had to put books with explicit content behind her desk because kids were coming into the library just to "read" them and giggle like they were reading a Playboy magazine, and she did this AGAINST THE WILL OF THE PRINCIPAL, it's clear that there is a sick agenda to sexualize children as young as possible. WHY? At what point do you think that children should NOT be exposed to explicit content? Do you even believe in a cut-off age? Why should SEXUALLY EXPLICIT material be readily available for children AT SCHOOL under the guise of "gender affirmation?" Do you see how absolutely sick it is that these questions are having to be asked??? I would seriously like to know if those of you who sponsored this bill are of sound mind or not. And are you going to just slap us in the face by passing YET ANOTHER BILL THAT THE PEOPLE OPPOSE? You all are unbelievable...

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 6:31:32 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Michele Golojuch	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I highly support this piece of legislation. Reading has always helped me understand the world around me or escape to a different world that is different and exciting. To think that anyone can take the books I love and cherish is beyond comprehension.

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 7:13:18 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Gaye Chan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**I wholeheartedly support this measure. Individuals have the right to free inquiry, and a right to form their own opinions**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 7:41:08 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Linda Morgan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a retired school librarian, I strongly support this bill. Censoring what children read is the job of parents, not the school system. Providing the opportunity for a student to become a strong reader is dependent on the student having access to books they choose to read.

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 7:56:41 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Matthew Anderson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB799. Free and open access to books , literature, history, drama, fiction, nonfiction should not be disallowed or banned. The dissemination of information, already highly curtailed by many representatives of the Republican Party, should be free and accessible.



**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 8:10:34 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Anne Farahi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Freedom to read!

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 8:22:53 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Younghee Overly	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thank you for hearing SB799 which would protect access our keiki have to wide range of reading materials outside of textbooks. Intellectual freedom is critical for quality education.

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 8:52:24 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Nathan Leo Braulick	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**I support the Freedom to Read Bill and ask that Hawaii join the growing list of states to pass legislation to prevent book bans because:**

- 1. In 2023 over 4200 books in schools and public libraries were targeted for book bans in several states.**
- 2. Hawaii must join the growing list of states to pass legislation to prevent book bans.**
- 3. The Freedom to Read is constitutionally protected by the First Amendment of the US Constitution.**
- 4. Individuals have the right to free inquiry and a right to form their own opinions.**
- 5. Libraries and public schools have an important role and must be protected because they promote intellectual freedom and equitable access to knowledge and information.**
- 6. Democracy requires an informed citizenry therefore we must protect access to knowledge and information so ensure that voters can make informed choices.**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 9:06:22 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Brian Piotrowski	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this measure because individuals have the right to free inquiry and a right to form their own opinions.

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 9:07:23 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Michelle Ma	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**I support this measure because individuals have the right to free inquiry and a right to form their own opinions.**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 9:38:23 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Leah Morse	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**I support this measure because individuals have the right to free inquiry and a right to form their own opinions.**

Thank you for you consideration,

Leah Morse

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 10:04:03 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kayla Marie	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support this measure

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 10:14:19 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Philip Johnson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**I support this measure because individuals have the right to free inquiry and a right to form their own opinions**



**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 10:19:25 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Suellen Barton	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

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I support freedom to choose what we read

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 11:04:00 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jennifer Shelton	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

There should be a freedom to read but there are inappropriate material that should be left out of public and school libraries. There have already been instances of inappropriate material being promoted that should need parents permission to access.

I OPPOSE THIS BILL

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 11:53:34 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Dr. Casandra Simonson, MD	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments: 2/8/25 Thank you to the Chair, Vice Chair, and Committee. My name is Dr. Casandra Simonson, MD FAAP. I am writing testimony on behalf of myself and not representing anyone else in support of the Freedom to Read Bill and ask that Hawaii join the growing list of states to pass legislation to prevent book bans because: 1. In 2023 over 4200 books in schools and public libraries were targeted for book bans in several states. 2. Hawaii must join the growing list of states to pass legislation to prevent book bans. 3. The Freedom to Read is constitutionally protected by the First Amendment of the US Constitution. 4. Individuals have the right to free inquiry and a right to form their own opinions. 5. Libraries and public schools have an important role and must be protected because they promote intellectual freedom and equitable access to knowledge and information. 6. Democracy requires an informed citizenry therefore we must protect access to knowledge and information so ensure that voters can make informed choices. Thank you for your time and consideration, Dr. Simonson

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 12:35:57 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Crystal Pang	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**\*\*Testimony Against SB799\*\***

As a mother of two, I feel compelled to express my opposition to SB799 and the implications it carries for our children’s education and well-being. While the bill aims to uphold the concept of the freedom to read, it raises significant concerns that cannot be overlooked.

1. **\*\*Inappropriate Material Access\*\***: The bill states that no books or materials shall be excluded based on the characteristics of the author or their viewpoints (lines 6-10). This provision could lead to children being exposed to literature that may not be age-appropriate or suitable for a school environment. As a parent, I believe it is vital to ensure that the materials accessible to our children are educational, enriching, and suitable for their developmental stage.

2. **\*\*Lack of Parental Control\*\***: By limiting the ability of schools to exclude certain materials, the bill undermines parental authority. Parents should have a say in what their children are exposed to, especially in a school setting where they spend a significant portion of their day. The removal of this discretion could leave parents feeling powerless in guiding their children's education and protecting them from potentially harmful content.

3. **\*\*Promotion of Ideological Bias\*\***: While the intention is to prevent partisan or ideological disapproval from influencing material selection, the reality is that every selection process is inherently subjective. By enforcing a broad acceptance of all materials, we risk introducing content that may promote divisive ideologies or controversial viewpoints without adequate context or critical engagement. This could create an environment that breeds confusion rather than understanding.

4. **\*\*Impact on Educational Integrity\*\***: The selection of educational materials should reflect the values and standards of the community. The bill’s language could dilute the quality of educational content, leading to an environment where sensationalism or ideologically driven narratives take precedence over factual, balanced education. Our children deserve a curriculum that prioritizes their intellectual growth and moral development.

5. **\*\*Potential for Psychological Harm\*\***: Exposure to certain materials without proper guidance can have lasting effects on a child's psychological and emotional well-being. Many children are not equipped to process complex or disturbing themes presented in some literature. It is crucial

for schools to have the ability to curate materials thoughtfully and responsibly to safeguard our children's mental health.

In conclusion, as a concerned mother, I urge you to consider the potential consequences of SB799 on our children's education. Upholding the freedom to read should not come at the cost of our children's safety, well-being, and the integrity of their educational experience. I strongly oppose this bill and advocate for a more balanced approach that prioritizes the needs and best interests of our children. Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 12:47:05 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
KELEN R CASEY	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this measure because individuals have the right to free inquiry and a right to form their own opinions.

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 12:48:28 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Breanna Zoey	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and members of the Committee,

I am writing in **strong support of SB799** because the freedom to read is fundamental to education, democracy, and personal growth. This bill is critical to protecting access to diverse books and perspectives, ensuring that students and the public have the opportunity to engage with ideas that challenge, inspire, and broaden their understanding of the world. Hawaii should make it clear that book bans have no place in our schools or libraries.

Across the country, we've seen an alarming rise in book bans, often driven by political, religious, or ideological agendas. These efforts don't protect students—they stifle knowledge, erase important voices, and undermine critical thinking. Censorship does nothing to make our communities stronger; it only weakens the foundation of an informed and educated society. SB799 puts Hawaii on the right side of history, joining states like California, Illinois, and Washington in standing up for intellectual freedom.

Libraries are more than just collections of books—they are places where people learn, grow, and encounter new perspectives. This bill ensures that books aren't removed simply because a vocal minority disagrees with their content. It protects the right of students and the public to explore literature, history, and ideas that reflect the diversity of our state and the world.

I urge the Legislature to pass SB799. Protect our libraries, our educators, and the fundamental right of every person in Hawaii to read and learn without fear of censorship.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

- Breanna Zoey (she/they)

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 12:49:38 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kerestin Walker	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and members of the Committee,

1. am writing in **strong support of SB799**, which upholds the fundamental freedom to read in our public and school libraries. This bill is essential in protecting access to diverse books, ensuring that students and the public continue to engage with a wide range of perspectives, and tells the world that book bans have no place in Hawaii.
1. recent years, there has been a growing trend of book bans across the country, restricting access to materials based on ideological and political objections. Hawaii must take action to prevent such censorship from undermining intellectual freedom and societal advancement. SB799 aligns our state with others, including California, Illinois, and Washington, that have enacted similar protections against book bans.
1. libraries play a crucial role in fostering education, critical thinking, and democracy. This bill ensures that books are not removed or banned due to the political, religious, or personal beliefs of a vocal minority, protecting the right of all individuals—especially students—to explore literature, history, and ideas that reflect the full diversity of our state and the world.

I urge the Legislature to pass SB799 to protect our libraries, our educators, and our fundamental right to read without fear of censorship.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Keke Walker



**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 12:50:42 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
TERI SAVAIINAEA	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chair Kidani, Chair Kim and Committee Members,

*I oppose* SB799.

Kind regards,

Teri Kia Savaiinaea

District 45, Wai'anae resident

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 12:59:26 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
(Rev.) Cloudia Charters	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, Greetings, Esteemed Legislators,

In these challenging times, it is most important that every citizen have the freedom to think, to read, and to share. This simple Bill will protect those precious rights for our Hawaii citizens and our Keiki. Don't let highly motivated bullies dictate to the majority. Mahalo for standing strong in this matter, gratefully, Charters family 96815

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 1:16:16 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Joe Wilson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and members of the Committee,

As the co-author of a children’s book (Kapaemahu) that got pulled into the ugly book ban fight in Virginia, I am writing to express my strong support for SB799, a bill that safeguards the fundamental right to read in our public and school libraries. This important legislation ensures continued access to a diverse range of books, allowing students and the public to engage with various perspectives, while making a clear statement that book bans have no place in Hawai‘i.

In recent years, book bans based on political and ideological objections have become a troubling trend across the nation. Hawai‘i, with a long history of diversity, respect, and inclusion, must take proactive steps to prevent this form of censorship from undermining intellectual freedom and societal progress. SB799 aligns our state with others, such as California, Illinois, and Washington, which have already passed similar protections against book bans.

Our libraries are essential in fostering education, critical thinking, and democratic values. This bill ensures that books will not be removed or banned due to the personal, political, or religious views of a vocal minority, protecting the right of all individuals, especially students, to explore literature and ideas that reflect the full diversity of our state and the world.

I strongly urge the Legislature to pass SB799 to protect our libraries, our educators, and our right to read freely without fear of censorship.

Mahalo for your attention and consideration,

Joe Wilson

Kaunala, North Shore O‘ahu

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 1:22:43 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
James E Raymond	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please enact common sense rules allowing book criteria to be established by educators within the DOE and not by politically motivated zealots trying to brainwash our keiki with extreme views.

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 1:44:16 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Darian	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am submitting this testimony in strong opposition to SB799, which seeks to allow sexually explicit books, such as *Gender Queer* and similar materials, into DOE libraries where **ALL children, regardless of grade level**, will have access to them. It is beyond disturbing that this bill is even being considered, and the lawmakers introducing and supporting this bill should be ashamed of themselves for pushing such a sick and dangerous agenda onto our keiki.

This is not about banning books - it is about **protecting children** from **pornographic, sexually explicit materials** that have absolutely **no place in our schools!** Books like *Gender Queer* **contain graphic depictions of sex acts, something that no minor, especially elementary-aged children, should ever be exposed to.** This is **NOT** educational this is the **sexualization of children**, plain and simple.

The fact that parents have to fight against something that should be common sense is infuriating. Schools should be a place of academic learning and safety, not a space for exposing children to inappropriate sexual content under the false pretense of inclusivity. There is a clear distinction between promoting understanding and outright grooming children through explicit material.

Furthermore, this bill is a **direct attack** on parental rights. Parents not the government should have the final say in what their children are exposed to. Pushing sexual content onto children behind parents backs is **unacceptable and predatory.** It is clear that those who support this bill **do not** have the best interests of Hawaii's children in mind.

I urge this committee to **reject SB799 in its entirety.** Our keiki deserve a school system that protects their innocence, respects parental rights, and prioritizes real education not a radical agenda that puts them at risk.

**Shame on anyone who supports this bill.** The people of Hawaii are watching, and we will not stay silent as our childrens safety and innocence are threatened.

Mahalo for your time. **Do the right thing.**

Sincerely,

An ANGRY mother & Hawaii Voter



**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 2:08:03 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Amber Vinson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and members of the Committee,

I am writing in **strong support of SB799**, which upholds the fundamental freedom to read in our public and school libraries. This bill is essential in protecting access to diverse books, ensuring that students and the public continue to engage with a wide range of perspectives, and tells the world that book bans have no place in Hawaii.

In recent years, there has been a growing trend of book bans across the country, restricting access to materials based on ideological and political objections. Hawaii must take action to prevent such censorship from undermining intellectual freedom and societal advancement. SB799 aligns our state with others, including California, Illinois, and Washington, that have enacted similar protections against book bans.

Our libraries play a crucial role in fostering education, critical thinking, and democracy. This bill ensures that books are not removed or banned due to the political, religious, or personal beliefs of a vocal minority, protecting the right of all individuals—especially students—to explore literature, history, and ideas that reflect the full diversity of our state and the world.

I urge the Legislature to pass SB799 to protect our libraries, our educators, and our fundamental right to read without fear of censorship.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Amber Vinson

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 2:19:03 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Helen Turano	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am calling to support Hawaii joining other states with the Freedom to Read Bill. I have been a mentor and researcher and simply enjoy reading. I believe dictating what people can read is pure censorship and represents small mindedness and favors a dictatorship.

The right to read unhindered leads to understanding our past and future. The Washington Post lists in its newspaper that “Democracy dies in darkness”. Censorship and having a list of reading material that is banned would be akin to being the person in a cave with someone telling them what the world looks like. They would never know the truth. They would never know anything outside what is given to them. We are not that world of black and white. That is the world of dictators. It doesn’t matter if this was done in the best interest or not. To function as a democracy, our citizens need access to full information and not bits and pieces.

When I was in grade school, I remember doing a project on our American Indians and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. At one of the Indian schools, the only book they about Indians was “The last of the Mohicans” That was shameful. Now, the light has been shown on how native Indian children were “re-educated” to the dominant society. This should not have happened to them nor should it happen to any of us. I consider having a reading list imposed on us and our children the same as “re-education”.

The Freedom to Read is protected in our Constitution in our First Amendment. It does not say that we can only read certain material because those are the only ones available or the only ones authorized. Please maintain an uncensored list that is not biased towards any religion or non-religion, any race, or any culture. Let people form their own minds and develop their own thoughts. They can do so by having equal access to information and not having a list of what is “good” or “safe” to read.



Brittney Zeeman  
Regarding Committee on Education  
2/7/2025

As a Master in Social Work student working in the Department of Education teach English to English learners, I see the need for equitable access to reading materials. Allowing the opportunity for freedom to education through reading materials is critical for students.

Beginning of this academic year I began working with kindergarten and first grade English learner students, I noticed there was a lack of reading being done at home. This is causing a decline in reading and comprehension skills in the classroom. Majority of the students I work with will also only ever access books and learning materials through school funded resources.

Because of my direct experience with students, I found it important to testify on this bill in support for allowing diverse reading materials in school settings. While some students may get the support they need at home for additional education, a good portion of students are not as privileged to be given the opportunity to be educated at home. Censoring school resources could be detrimental to what materials students have access to in their free education.

When considering this bill, being considerate of the language and cultural barriers is important when considering what materials to obtain in the library.

Thank you for taking the time to review this testimony and consider passing the bill as it will greatly impact the education of early education students.

Sincerely,  
Brittney Z.

Hawai'i State Senate Committee on Education  
Hearing  
Monday, February 10, 2025 at 3:02 PM  
Conference Room 229 & Videoconference  
State Capitol  
415 South Beretania Street

RE: S.B. 799 -RELATING TO THE FREEDOM TO READ.

Testimony in SUPPORT

Aloha Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Mercado Kim, and Member of the Committee,

My name is Christine Andrews from Wailuku, Maui, and I submit this testimony in strong SUPPORT of S.B. 799 Relating to the Freedom to Read. I feel that I cannot speak more effectively on this topic than the American Library Association and the Association of American Publishers do in their joint statement, "The Freedom to Read Statement" adopted on July 26, 2006, and subsequently endorsed by: the American Booksellers for Free Expression, The Association of American University Presses, The Children's Book Council, the Freedom to Read Foundation, the National Association of College Stores, the National Coalition Against Censorship, the National Council of Teachers of English, and the Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression. I quote below the joint statement in its entirety and incorporate it as my testimony with the request that the members vote in support of S.B. 799. My appreciation to the members of the Committee for hearing this bill.

"The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove or limit access to reading materials, to censor content in schools, to label "controversial" views, to distribute lists of "objectionable" books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to counter threats to safety or national security, as well as to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as individuals devoted to reading and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read.

Most attempts at suppression rest on a denial of the fundamental premise of democracy: that the ordinary individual, by exercising critical judgment, will select the good and reject the bad. We trust Americans to recognize propaganda and misinformation, and to make their own decisions about what they read and believe. We do not believe they are prepared to sacrifice their heritage of a free press in order to be "protected" against what others think may be bad for them. We believe they still favor free enterprise in ideas and expression.

These efforts at suppression are related to a larger pattern of pressures being brought against education, the press, art and images, films, broadcast media, and the Internet. The problem is not only one of actual censorship. The shadow of fear cast by these pressures leads, we suspect, to an even larger voluntary curtailment of expression by those who seek to avoid controversy or unwelcome scrutiny by government officials.

Such pressure toward conformity is perhaps natural to a time of accelerated change. And yet suppression is never more dangerous than in such a time of social tension. Freedom has given the United States the elasticity to endure strain. Freedom keeps open the path of novel and creative solutions, and enables change to come by choice. Every silencing of a heresy, every enforcement of an orthodoxy, diminishes the toughness and resilience of our society and leaves it the less able to deal with controversy and difference.

Now as always in our history, reading is among our greatest freedoms. The freedom to read and write is almost the only means for making generally available ideas or manners of expression that can initially command only a small audience. The written word is the natural medium for the new idea and the untried voice from which come the original contributions to social growth. It is essential to the extended discussion that serious thought requires, and to the accumulation of knowledge and ideas into organized collections.

We believe that free communication is essential to the preservation of a free society and a creative culture. We believe that these pressures toward conformity present the danger of limiting the range and variety of inquiry and expression on which our democracy and our culture depend. We believe that every American community must jealously guard the freedom to publish and to circulate, in order to preserve its own freedom to read. We believe that publishers and librarians have a profound responsibility to give validity to that freedom to read by making it possible for the readers to choose freely from a variety of offerings.

The freedom to read is guaranteed by the Constitution. Those with faith in free people will stand firm on these constitutional guarantees of essential rights and will exercise the responsibilities that accompany these rights.

We therefore affirm these propositions:

- *It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by the majority.*  
Creative thought is by definition new, and what is new is different. The bearer of every new thought is a rebel until that idea is refined and tested. Totalitarian systems attempt to maintain themselves in power by the ruthless suppression of any concept that challenges the established orthodoxy. The power of a democratic system to adapt to change is vastly strengthened by the freedom of its citizens to choose widely from among conflicting opinions offered freely to them. To stifle every nonconformist idea at birth would mark the end of the democratic process. Furthermore, only through the constant activity of weighing and selecting can the democratic mind attain the strength demanded by times like these. We need to know not only what we believe but why we believe it.
- *Publishers, librarians, and booksellers do not need to endorse every idea or presentation they make available. It would conflict with the public interest for them to establish their own political, moral, or aesthetic views as a standard for determining what should be published or circulated.*

Publishers and librarians serve the educational process by helping to make available

knowledge and ideas required for the growth of the mind and the increase of learning. They do not foster education by imposing as mentors the patterns of their own thought. The people should have the freedom to read and consider a broader range of ideas than those that may be held by any single librarian or publisher or government or church. It is wrong that what one can read should be confined to what another thinks proper.

- *It is contrary to the public interest for publishers or librarians to bar access to writings on the basis of the personal history or political affiliations of the author.*

No art or literature can flourish if it is to be measured by the political views or private lives of its creators. No society of free people can flourish that draws up lists of writers to whom it will not listen, whatever they may have to say.

- *There is no place in our society for efforts to coerce the taste of others, to confine adults to the reading matter deemed suitable for adolescents, or to inhibit the efforts of writers to achieve artistic expression.*

To some, much of modern expression is shocking. But is not much of life itself shocking? We cut off literature at the source if we prevent writers from dealing with the stuff of life. Parents and teachers have a responsibility to prepare the young to meet the diversity of experiences in life to which they will be exposed, as they have a responsibility to help them learn to think critically for themselves. These are affirmative responsibilities, not to be discharged simply by preventing them from reading works for which they are not yet prepared. In these matters values differ, and values cannot be legislated; nor can machinery be devised that will suit the demands of one group without limiting the freedom of others.

- *It is not in the public interest to force a reader to accept the prejudgment of a label characterizing any expression or its author as subversive or dangerous.*

The ideal of labeling presupposes the existence of individuals or groups with wisdom to determine by authority what is good or bad for others. It presupposes that individuals must be directed in making up their minds about the ideas they examine. But Americans do not need others to do their thinking for them.

- *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians, as guardians of the people's freedom to read, to contest encroachments upon that freedom by individuals or groups seeking to impose their own standards or tastes upon the community at large; and by the government whenever it seeks to reduce or deny public access to public information.*

It is inevitable in the give and take of the democratic process that the political, the moral, or the aesthetic concepts of an individual or group will occasionally collide with those of another individual or group. In a free society individuals are free to determine for themselves what they wish to read, and each group is free to determine what it will recommend to its freely associated members. But no group has the right to take the law into its own hands, and to impose its own concept of politics or morality upon other members of a democratic society. Freedom is no freedom if it is accorded only to the accepted and the inoffensive. Further, democratic societies are more safe, free, and creative when the free flow of public information is not restricted by governmental prerogative or self-censorship.

- *It is the responsibility of publishers and librarians to give full meaning to the freedom to read by providing books that enrich the quality and diversity of thought and expression.*

*By the exercise of this affirmative responsibility, they can demonstrate that the answer to a "bad" book is a good one, the answer to a "bad" idea is a good one.*

The freedom to read is of little consequence when the reader cannot obtain matter fit for that reader's purpose. What is needed is not only the absence of restraint, but the positive provision of opportunity for the people to read the best that has been thought and said. Books are the major channel by which the intellectual inheritance is handed down, and the principal means of its testing and growth. The defense of the freedom to read requires of all publishers and librarians the utmost of their faculties, and deserves of all Americans the fullest of their support.

We state these propositions neither lightly nor as easy generalizations. We here stake out a lofty claim for the value of the written word. We do so because we believe that it is possessed of enormous variety and usefulness, worthy of cherishing and keeping free. We realize that the application of these propositions may mean the dissemination of ideas and manners of expression that are repugnant to many persons. We do not state these propositions in the comfortable belief that what people read is unimportant. We believe rather that what people read is deeply important; that ideas can be dangerous; but that the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. Freedom itself is a dangerous way of life, but it is ours."

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This statement was originally issued in May of 1953 by the Westchester Conference of the American Library Association and the American Book Publishers Council, which in 1970 consolidated with the American Educational Publishers Institute to become the Association of American Publishers.

Adopted June 25, 1953, by the ALA Council and the AAP Freedom to Read Committee; amended January 28, 1972; January 16, 1991; July 12, 2000; June 30, 2004.

Citation: "The Freedom to Read Statement", American Library Association, July 26, 2006.  
<https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/freedomreadstatement> (Accessed February 8, 2025).  
Document ID: 24cc13f0-22e4-4c16-ba92-d68ee65b9e28

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 3:17:23 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Rita Wong	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose SB799. This allows porn in our schools for our keiki allowing material no parent would want their child to have access to. Please stop the attack on our keiki!!

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 3:28:00 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Gail Morrison	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**I support this measure because individuals have the right to free inquiry and a right to form their own opinions.**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 3:17:30 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
JANE TOLLEFSRUD	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**I support this measure because individuals have the right to free inquiry and a right to form their own opinions. Let's keep our schools and libraries open to a rich diversity of reading materials!**



**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 3:29:45 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Eileen McKee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I strongly support the passage of SB 799. Books should be revered, not banned. I absorbed them as a child and still do so today. They're currently getting me through the ugliness going on at our federal level of government.

Mahalo for considering my testimony.

Eileen McKee, Kihei

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 3:37:49 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
glenn oshiro	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha. As a lifetime library patron, 78 years, and a parent and grandparent of library cardholders, I ask that you strongly support this measure.

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 3:44:06 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
DeWaine Tollefsrud	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Aloha, I support this measure because individuals have the right to free inquiry and a right to form their own opinions. I do not believe anyone should be able to dictate what other families and children should or should not be exposed to. Our state library system has a GREAT procedure for addressing personal concerns already in place.**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 3:50:59 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Joelle Seashell	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This is disgusting. Your are totally out of line. Stop trying to oversexualize children. You folks are perverse to propose this.

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 4:22:07 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kanani Kai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill.

Kanani Kai

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 4:27:07 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Isis Usborne	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha e,

Please support this vital bill!

Mahalo,

Isis Usborne (96815)

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 4:31:07 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kelly Campbell	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support SB799. Libraries in Hawaii do an excellent job upholding the freedom to read. We need to continue that freedom to ensure our citizens are emotionally, mentally, and intellectually minded individuals. Please support SB799 and the freedom to read.

"The freedom to read is essential to our democracy. It is continuously under attack. Private groups and public authorities in various parts of the country are working to remove or limit access to reading materials, to censor content in schools, to label "controversial" views, to distribute lists of "objectionable" books or authors, and to purge libraries. These actions apparently rise from a view that our national tradition of free expression is no longer valid; that censorship and suppression are needed to counter threats to safety or national security, as well as to avoid the subversion of politics and the corruption of morals. We, as individuals devoted to reading and as librarians and publishers responsible for disseminating ideas, wish to assert the public interest in the preservation of the freedom to read." - American Library Association  
["Freedom to Read"](#) Statement

Kelly Campbell  
Hilo, 96720

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 4:48:23 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jennifer Lum	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support the Freedom to Read Bill and ask that Hawaii join the growing list of states to pass legislation to prevent book bans because:

1. In 2023 over 4200 books in schools and public libraries were targeted for book bans in several states.
2. Hawaii must join the growing list of states to pass legislation to prevent book bans.
3. The Freedom to Read is constitutionally protected by the First Amendment of the US Constitution.
4. Individuals have the right to free inquiry and a right to form their own opinions.
5. Libraries and public schools have an important role and must be protected because they promote intellectual freedom and equitable access to knowledge and information.
6. Democracy requires an informed citizenry therefore we must protect access to knowledge and information so ensure that voters can make informed choices.

Mahalo for your support of this SB799.

Jennifer Lum, 'Ewa Beach



**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 5:42:34 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Alice Abellanida	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill.

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 6:00:59 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Marlene Thom	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support the Freedom to Read Bill and ask that Hawaii join the growing list of states to pass legislation to prevent book bans because:

1. In 2023 over 4200 books in schools and public libraries were targeted for book bans in several states.
2. Hawaii must join the growing list of states to pass legislation to prevent book bans.
3. The Freedom to Read is constitutionally protected by the First Amendment of the US Constitution.
4. Individuals have the right to free inquiry and a right to form their own opinions.
5. Libraries and public schools have an important role and must be protected because they promote intellectual freedom and equitable access to knowledge and information.
6. Democracy requires an informed citizenry therefore we must protect access to knowledge and information so ensure that voters can make informed choices.

The incalculable benefits of having access to books on any topic or viewpoint cannot be overemphasized, especially for the development of young minds but equally important for adults of any age. Book banning is a practice deployed and beloved by autocrats who seek to limit their citizens' understanding of the world, and we can never allow ourselves to succumb to such tactics.

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 6:03:34 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ronelle Andrade	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose SB799 this bill is inappropriate to children and completely offensive. Keep out of kids reach.

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 6:42:45 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sheila Medeiros	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY OPPOSE THIS BILL!

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 6:43:36 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Alice Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Banning books occurs when governments become afraid of their citizens learning anything that might challenge the government's power. This is what fascists do. We do not need to slip down that slippery slope. An educated populace is vital for a functioning society.

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 6:48:25 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
shawna kahoopii	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

The fact that I even have to write in to oppose this bill, absolutely disgust me. Protect our children and do what's right! Stop giving in to the narrative for children to have access in school to read disgusting pornographic literature. I'm highly disappointed in the State of Hawaii and its politicians. You folks have lost your way. You should all be ashamed of yourselves.

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 6:56:52 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Tamara Luthy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support the Freedom to Read Bill and ask that Hawaii join the growing list of states to pass legislation to prevent book bans because:

1. In 2023 over 4200 books in schools and public libraries were targeted for book bans in several states.
2. Hawaii must join the growing list of states to pass legislation to prevent book bans.
3. The Freedom to Read is constitutionally protected by the First Amendment of the US Constitution.
4. Individuals have the right to free inquiry and a right to form their own opinions.
5. Libraries and public schools have an important role and must be protected because they promote intellectual freedom and equitable access to knowledge and information.
6. Democracy requires an informed citizenry therefore we must protect access to knowledge and information so ensure that voters can make informed choices.

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 7:24:09 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sarah Bariantos	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY OPPOSE State Bill 799 strips local schools and parents of their ability to oversee what books are available to children, giving excessive control to the Department of Education and the State Librarian. While "freedom to read" is important, this bill forces schools to include materials that may be inappropriate, controversial, or even harmful to young minds.

Under this bill, schools could be required to keep books containing sexually explicit content, including pornography and graphic depictions of sex acts, under the guise of "freedom to read." Additionally, it could mandate the inclusion of materials promoting radical gender ideology and LGBTQ+ agendas, overriding parents' rights to determine what is appropriate for their children.

Parents and local educators—not bureaucrats—should have the final say in what is available in school libraries. Instead of a one-size-fits-all mandate, we must preserve local control and parental involvement. State Bill 799 threatens that balance, and I strongly oppose it.



**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 8:40:36 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Anika Agerlie	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a public school teacher, I will always support protecting our students' rights to access information via reading. Further, our state Public Library System also must be protected from ridiculous book bans that seek to limit the books, knowledge, and information that are accessible to the general public.

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 8:42:24 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Johanne Mitchell	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The freedom to read is only a right if 1. that right is given to ADULT citizens who are cognitive and developed to understand the material being read and 2. that this freedom isnt subject to a departments choice on what will or wont be read. Don't miscontrue a freedom and right for your own idealogies because if it were a "freedom" the people should have a choice on what will be put in these libraries. Especially, if it involves the people's children. For a department to choose what will be put in these children libraries is not a freedom. This is not free. This is nothing short of a technocracy.

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 9:51:55 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Wanda Anae-Onishi	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and members of the committee,

I am writing in strong support of SB799 which is essential in protecting access to diverse books, allowing readers to engage with a wide range of perspectives and telling the world that Hawaii doesn't ban books.

I urge you to pass SB799 to protect our libraries, educators and fundamental rights to read without fear of censorship. Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 9:27:07 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Danielle Bergan	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and members of the Committee,

1. am writing in **strong support of SB799**, which upholds the fundamental freedom to read in our public and school libraries. This bill is essential in protecting access to diverse books, ensuring that students and the public continue to engage with a wide range of perspectives, and tells the world that book bans have no place in Hawaii.
1. recent years, there has been a growing trend of book bans across the country, restricting access to materials based on ideological and political objections. Hawaii must take action to prevent such censorship from undermining intellectual freedom and societal advancement. SB799 aligns our state with others, including California, Illinois, and Washington, that have enacted similar protections against book bans.
1. libraries play a crucial role in fostering education, critical thinking, and democracy. This bill ensures that books are not removed or banned due to the political, religious, or personal beliefs of a vocal minority, protecting the right of all individuals—especially students—to explore literature, history, and ideas that reflect the full diversity of our state and the world.

I urge the Legislature to pass SB799 to protect our libraries, our educators, and our fundamental right to read without fear of censorship.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Danielle Marie Bergan

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 10:06:12 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
gabrielle davidson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**I support this measure because individuals have the right to free inquiry and a right to form their own opinions.**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 10:20:15 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lesha Mathes	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill. This leaves it open for pornography to be brought into the schools. Parents should always have a say in what their children are reading. They are not the government's or the school's children. They are the parents children and it is their decision. Way too vague.

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/8/2025 11:23:18 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lynn Otaguro	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**I support this measure because individuals have the right to free inquiry and a right to form their own opinions.**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 7:39:18 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Thaddeus Pham	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and members of the Committee,

As a Hawai'i resident and avid reader, I am writing in **strong support of SB799**, which upholds the fundamental freedom to read in our public and school libraries. This bill is essential in protecting access to diverse books, ensuring that students and the public continue to engage with a wide range of perspectives, and tells the world that book bans have no place in Hawaii.

In recent years, there has been a growing trend of book bans across the country, restricting access to materials based on ideological and political objections. Hawaii must take action to prevent such censorship from undermining intellectual freedom and societal advancement. SB799 aligns our state with others, including California, Illinois, and Washington, that have enacted similar protections against book bans.

Our libraries play a crucial role in fostering education, critical thinking, and democracy. This bill ensures that books are not removed or banned due to the political, religious, or personal beliefs of a vocal minority, protecting the right of all individuals—especially students—to explore literature, history, and ideas that reflect the full diversity of our state and the world.

I urge the Legislature to pass SB799 to protect our libraries, our educators, and our fundamental right to read without fear of censorship.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Thaddeus Pham (he/him)

Makiki, HI



**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 8:08:50 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
James K. Rzonca	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 8:14:04 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Andrew Crossland	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**I STRONGLY OPPOSE** this Bill which gives the Department of Education and State librarians the sole authority to decide which books are appropriate for children in school and public libraries. The parents are being ignored. I urge all members of the Committee to **VOTE NO** on this Bill.

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 8:21:02 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Dayna	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill because I am not mentally ill. What sane person feels the need to sexualize or show pornographic type of books to children? Disgusting and shameful. Free speech and not banning books is one thing but you are committing child abuse and not caring about what parents think when you work for us! We don't want our children exposed to this stuff. It has no place in the classroom. How dare you tell us what is going to happen with our children against our wishes. Completely un-American. Completely communist. These are our children, you disgusting tyrannical pigs. The people have had enough of your overreach. You'll all be fired soon enough. Myself and many others will be taking their kids out of your abusive and disgusting school systems and they will collapse. Way to go! You make me sick. Hope you all rot in hell.

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 8:25:49 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Jennifer Cabjuan	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Stop grooming our kids for access to pedophiles. Bring back the Bible on schools like other States have done. God will hold you accountable for your actions. 📖🔥😈

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 8:30:27 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kaiulani Bowers	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill. As a parent we should have the right to what we feel is appropriate for our children and this bill goes against that

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 8:33:53 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Laurie Anne Bell	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Schools promoting DEI have no business teaching it to children. Parents are being forced to home school. How about a common sense approach to teaching. Man and woman, reading wholesome books that don't confuse children. We must stop telling them they can be any gender. That is a bought and paid for ideology that has no place in our schools. Children are are biggest responsibility and gift from God. Let's get back to letting kids be kids and adults stop teaching them confusion.

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 8:56:30 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Tai Arakawa	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Testimony to the Senate Committee on Education  
Monday, February 10, 2025 3:00 PM

SB 799: Relating to the Freedom to Read

Aloha Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to express my support for SB 799 as a private citizen with a background in academic librarianship. The increasing number of book bans and challenges across the nation is highly detrimental to both students and society as a whole. While every person has the right to decide what is appropriate reading for their children, this should not give them carte blanche to make the decision for other parents, children, and adults. The First Amendment should apply to everyone, not a handful of individuals who want to limit access to books and resources they approve of. What people read should be their personal decision, and banning books inhibits their ability and freedom to choose to consume their preferred texts.

Librarians are uniquely trained to select materials for their library collections. School library & media specialists and public librarians will have had Reader's Advisory classes to train them in how to evaluate materials on whether they will be appropriate to add to their collections. Public librarians have special positions (e.g. children's, YA, adult librarian roles) that allow them to a) know their community make-up and b) make purchasing decisions that suit the communities they serve. It just makes sense to have qualified people who are embedded in their local community and know the demographic do the library collection maintenance.

Finally, children and young adults do not all fit into the same reading box. There are some that will be reading above or below their age level, or are simply not interested in the titles or subjects available in their particular library collection. This can lead to frustration especially if they do not have a qualified librarian to help guide them to other alternatives. I was very lucky to

always have an understanding librarian in my school(s) and public library. They understood that I was not interested in the books the library had for my age group and were able to point me towards books in a higher reading level that were still content-appropriate. I will be forever grateful that my librarians worked with me to support my love of reading instead of stifling it.

Passing SB 799 will help protect everyone's access to books and other materials and support young peoples' interest in reading. The freedom to read is an investment in our future as a multicultural and multi-ethnic democratic society where everyone can see themselves reflected at their library.

Thank you,  
Tai Arakawa  
Librarian



**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 8:58:19 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kirk Powles	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The inclusion of books on topics like sexual orientation, gender, religious disapproval, diversity, societal trends, and new insights in elementary school libraries raises concerns regarding the developmental readiness of young children. At this stage, children are still forming their understanding of the world, and introducing complex and sensitive topics could create confusion or discomfort for students, particularly when families may hold different views on these matters.

Furthermore, parents and guardians often feel that these topics should be discussed in a context that aligns with their personal, cultural, or religious values, and they may prefer to have such conversations at home rather than within a school setting. The role of the school library should be to support basic literacy development, imaginative exploration, and the foundation of education, without introducing potentially divisive or controversial issues that could undermine parental authority.

In addition, these topics often reflect societal trends that can shift over time, and exposing young children to constantly changing social perspectives may not provide them with a stable and balanced view of the world. Some may argue that the focus should remain on fostering academic and emotional growth, rather than delving into discussions that could potentially overburden young students with concepts that they are not yet ready to process fully.

In conclusion, while the topics of sexual orientation, gender, and societal diversity are important, they may be better suited for older students who have a stronger understanding of abstract concepts and are better equipped to handle diverse viewpoints in a respectful manner.

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 9:03:07 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sharron VanDeusen	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly OPPOSE. Bill SB799 poses a significant threat to parental rights in Hawaii by attempting to legislate that parents should not have a say in determining what content is suitable for their children in school and public libraries. This legislation would override the efforts of parents who have been actively involved in ensuring that library materials are age-appropriate and align with community standards. By removing parental oversight, SB799 would expose children to materials that many parents consider inappropriate or harmful, undermining the fundamental role of parents in guiding their children's moral and educational development. This bill should NEVER be passed. Save the children.

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 9:10:10 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
micah inoue	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and members of the Committee,

I am writing in **strong support of SB799**, which upholds the fundamental freedom to read in our public and school libraries. This bill is essential in protecting access to diverse books, ensuring that students and the public continue to engage with a wide range of perspectives, and tells the world that book bans have no place in Hawaii.

In recent years, there has been a growing trend of book bans across the country, restricting access to materials based on ideological and political objections. Hawaii must take action to prevent such censorship from undermining intellectual freedom and societal advancement. SB799 aligns our state with others, including California, Illinois, and Washington, that have enacted similar protections against book bans.

Our libraries play a crucial role in fostering education, critical thinking, and democracy. This bill ensures that books are not removed or banned due to the political, religious, or personal beliefs of a vocal minority, protecting the right of all individuals—especially students—to explore literature, history, and ideas that reflect the full diversity of our state and the world.

I urge the Legislature to pass SB799 to protect our libraries, our educators, and our fundamental right to read without fear of censorship.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Micah Inoue

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 9:13:05 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Isaac blanchard	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I'm not in support of passing this bill. Please stick to common core education. Keep all sexual type books out of school and leave that to the families. Mahalo for taking my testimonial.

isaac

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 9:19:24 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Scott Garris	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Parents should have input into what books are in children's hands. No porn for children.

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 9:20:10 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Bobbie Thompson Tom	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I do not believe that these institutions should be able to decide what books go in the libraries. It is not safe for children to be learning about sex and other related issues at an early age. This should be decided by their families

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 9:21:05 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Bronson Teixeira	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I strongly oppose this bill, mahalo.

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 9:25:29 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Brittney Helenihi	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Oppose



**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 9:25:24 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Eve Furchgott	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

FREEDOM TO READ is essential to the well-being & education of our youth and the welfare of our entire state & nation. Banning books based on sectarian, religious or other personal biases only hurts all of us. Please support this bill.

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 9:27:40 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Laurie Yano Kahiapo	Testifying for Pono Records	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Mahalo for your consideration. I am in deep opposition to SB799. It is appalling for me to think that our keiki can be exposed to literal pornography. No one can "unsee" what they have been exposed to. To even introduce this erodes our trust and faith that our legislators are out for the best interest of the people of Hawai'i. Please oppose SB799. Mahalo!

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 9:33:14 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
KELVIN AWAYA	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose SB799.

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 9:39:07 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
karen Mountain	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Why should the one dept have the SOLE authority? We as a community should decide. It is up to the community to protect our children from TRENDS. Libraries for children under 18 should be monitor just like Alcohol, Tobacco, Driving, Gambling. I oppose this bill.

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 9:48:45 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
christy Kalama	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha kākou

Mahalo creator for all your blessings

may our children be safe from harm to their bodies minds and spirits.

may schools be safe learning spaces to cultivate our children's God given gifts and talents.

May they be safe from the hidden agendas that attempt to create confusion, discord and disharmony.

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 9:59:36 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Shanda Brack	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and members of the Committee,

I am writing in **strong support of SB799**, which upholds the fundamental freedom to read in our public and school libraries.

Maintaining access to a wide range of books of varying perspectives is a critical aspect of ensuring a balanced educational system and a health community and democracy. The bill will reinforce the importance of freedom of speech and resisting governmental overreach.

Book bans have no place in our society. As a nurse practitioner and a queer woman, I fear the effects book bans might have on our community's ability to learn about topics that are deemed unsavory by minority extremist groups. More importantly I fear the consequences of children being unable to find themselves represented in books in their local libraries or schools. Inclusion and representation matter.

Other states including California, Illinois and Washington have enacted similar protections and Hawaii should not miss this opportunity to protect our democracy and independence.

I urge the Legislature to pass SB799 to protect our libraries, our educators, and our fundamental right to read without fear of censorship.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Shanda Brack, APRN she/her

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:00:48 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jeffrey F Mizuno	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Text

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:04:34 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Shani Hough	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose Bill SB799, parents have been fighting across the Nation to keep unappropriate books out of school libraries & out of children's section of public libraries! Porn books should not be allowed in libraries for our children



**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:24:58 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Hannis Webb	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Inappropriate books should stay out of schools

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:33:55 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kuuleilani Reyes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee Members on Education,

I am writing as a concerned individual, educator, and citizen. I urge you to support SB799 Freedom to Read, because upholding the access to reading various materials is fundamental to an educated and informed society. For our democracy to thrive, it is imperative to have an inclusion of diverse and multiple perspectives. The State Librarian must include materials to reflect our many views, regardless of one's own personal political agenda. Hawai'i is the Aloha State, where we respect and honor each other.

Thank you for your kind consideration.

Sincerely,

Kuuleilani Reyes

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:48:58 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sunyeen Pai	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Chair and Vice Chair of the Senate Committee on Education,

I am writing in support of SB799, Relating to the Freedom to Read. I am a former professor and librarian, retired from our community college system. Public libraries have long served as the cornerstone of democratic access to knowledge, and the freedom to read is essential to this vital mission that supports our democracy. Librarians are trained in the professional skills needed to carefully select educational and popular materials that help our citizens with reliable information. Historical attempts to ban books have consistently undermined intellectual freedom and placed society on the wrong side of progress. As this bill states, no books or other materials should be removed from circulation because of the race, nationality, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or political or social views of the author, or due to partisan, ideological, or religious disapproval. Our public librarians are the best experts in making careful decisions about the books that they offer to our communities.

Yours truly,  
Sunny Pai, PhD

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:52:01 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Donald Ching	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing in support of this bill and the freedom to read.

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:13:34 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ellen-Rae Cachola	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Members of the Education Committee,

Please support SB 799 Freedom to Read.

It is appropriate that the State Librarian and other state public librarians, under the support of the Department of Education, to be the ones to determine library collections based on their professional judgements. It is within the professional training of the state and public librarians to protect and nurture the public's freedom to read. Hawai'i state public librarians follow professional standards, such as the Hawaii State Library Collection Development Policy, the American Library Association Bill of Rights, which prepares librarians to study the demographics and needs of diverse library patrons and the surrounding community, and which helps them develop collections that are relevant to many audiences. It is the library's responsibility to nurture intellectual freedom within the public so they can make informed decisions. It is the parent and guardian's responsibility to monitor, include and exclude, what their child reads, based on their own opinion or views.

Sincerely,

Ellen-Rae Cachola

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:31:58 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Anela Kealakai	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, my name is Anela, and I am a concerned parent and a strong advocate for **parental rights** and **children's well-being**.

I agree with the importance of the **freedom to read**, but I draw the line when it comes to exposing our keiki to **sexually explicit content** in **school libraries**. Right now, there is a book being made available in schools that contains **explicit illustrations**, and I find this unacceptable. While I support the freedom of expression, children, especially in a school setting, should not have access to materials that are inappropriate for their age.

Instead of focusing on controversial or inappropriate content, I believe that schools should be preparing our children for the **real world**. They should be learning practical skills that will help them succeed as adults, like **finance, real estate, interview techniques, and emotional intelligence**. These are the kinds of skills that will truly benefit our keiki and help them thrive in life.

I understand the need for intellectual freedom, and I am not against children having access to a broad range of ideas and viewpoints. However, we must ensure that the materials available to them are age-appropriate and align with what is truly important for their growth and development. It is not the role of the **Department of Education** to expose our children to material that goes against our values as parents.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I hope that you will prioritize the well-being and future of our keiki by ensuring that school libraries focus on teaching them the skills they will actually need in life.

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 11:59:41 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Meera Garud	Individual	Comments	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and Members of the Committee:

I support the intent of SB799 Relating to the Freedom to Read and respectfully offer comments.

I agree that access to a high quality, diverse library collection is essential for students to develop a love for reading and navigate the complex world they live in. However, the most qualified person to maintain such a collection is a licensed school librarian, and only 1 in 4 schools has one (data: <https://bit.ly/3PecS4V>). Further, keeping a collection up-to-date requires significant and consistent funding. Schools do not receive dedicated funding for library resources and many librarians rely on fundraising. Can we make sure all schools have a librarian and funds so they can successfully meet this bill’s mandate to “provide a broad and relevant collection”?

My understanding is that there is no language in HRS §302A that discusses school libraries and this bill would create a new subpart. Beyond maintaining the collection, licensed school librarians are a critical part of a vibrant school community. Librarians collaborate with teachers to create meaningful, project-based learning experiences where students learn lifelong skills like critical thinking and problem solving.

To address this, could the new subpart also define the purpose and hallmarks of a high quality school library? I am providing sample language for your consideration, from a House Resolution (HR168) that was adopted in 2024:

A high quality school library:

- Is staffed with a licensed school librarian;
- Ensures every student has equitable access to resources and is able to locate, access, and use resources that are organized and cataloged;
- Has a collection development plan that includes, but is not limited to, materials selection and deselection, a challenged materials procedure, and an intellectual and academic freedom statement;
- Is housed in a central location that provides an environment for expanded learning and supports a variety of student interests; and
- Has technology and internet access.

I also recommend that the Senate consider ways to ensure schools can purchase new library resources. Some states provide dedicated, per-pupil funding to maintain the library collection: in 2023-24, Wisconsin provided \$56.87 per pupil, Washington state provided \$22.65 per pupil, and New York provided \$6.25.

Despite these questions and suggestions, I truly appreciate the Senate's attention to this critical issue. All kids deserve and benefit from access to a high-quality, relevant library collection. Mahalo for the opportunity to offer testimony.



**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:11:14 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Corinne Solomon	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose SB799.

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:20:33 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
roberta cestare	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly support SB799 reinforcing the ability of professional and dedicated librarians to maintain public library collections.

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:26:15 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jonathan Hayes	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill. We need more books.

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:43:10 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Russell Garcia	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill in a public library we shouldn't have any sexual book for child . It should be that 18 years and old in a locked glass case . No child need to know about sex . That should be me as a parent teaching my child the birds and the bee's . In fact we do not need sex education in school period. Again I oppose this bill

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:46:56 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Paul Littleton	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill sb799.

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:51:35 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Amanda Wehrly	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Please do not pass SB799. I love reading and it is a wonderful thing for children/anyone to read, But this filth that is being pushed on on Keiki is so wrong. Porn books should not be in our schools just like how to make a bomb should not be. . I would think anyone offering keiki these types of book is breaking the law. Whoever suggested this bill needs to have a mental evaluation. This is sick.

Please stop this bill,

Amanda Wehrly

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:53:44 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Michele Wilhelm	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I highly oppose this bill! It is contrary to the the new executive orders being established in our land. And it is one more attempt to remove discretion of parents about what their children should n have access to in schools. There are materials that deserve to be reviewed before allowing young minds to explore. This billl does not protect children. It puts them at risk to being exposed to inappropriate images and narratives to mature for young minds. Parents pay for the school systems. They have the right to give input into what their children are exposed to. Stop stealing our rights as tax paying citizens. And for God's sake protect innocent minds from being exposed to sexually explicit materials. The title Freedom to Read is such a disguise and will be exposed.

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:56:43 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Nikos Leverenz	Testifying for Hawaii Health & Harm Reduction Center	Support	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Mercado Kim, and Committee Members:

On behalf of Hawai'i Health and Harm Reduction Center (HHHRC), I am writing in strong support of this measure.

HHHRC also requests that, in alignment with our state's non-discrimination laws, the bill be amended to include "sex" and "gender identity or expression" as distinct categories.

With numerous executive orders from the current White House occupant seeking to erase, suppress, exclude, and denigrate trans persons and other sexual and gender minorities, it is imperative that Hawai'i policymakers take affirmative steps to strengthen explicit protections under state law.

Mahalo for the opportunity to provide testimony.



**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 12:57:51 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Rev. Dr. Robert W. Nelson	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill because individuals have the right to free inquiry and a right to their own opinions. Certain books should not be subject to exclusion on the basis of anyone's political or religious views or opinionsl

From: Renee Dieperink  
Date: 2/9/25  
Re: [SB799 Relating to the Freedom to Read](#)  
Hearing: [Committee on Education, Mon Feb 10, 2025 at 3 PM](#)

## I vehemently OPPOSE SB799

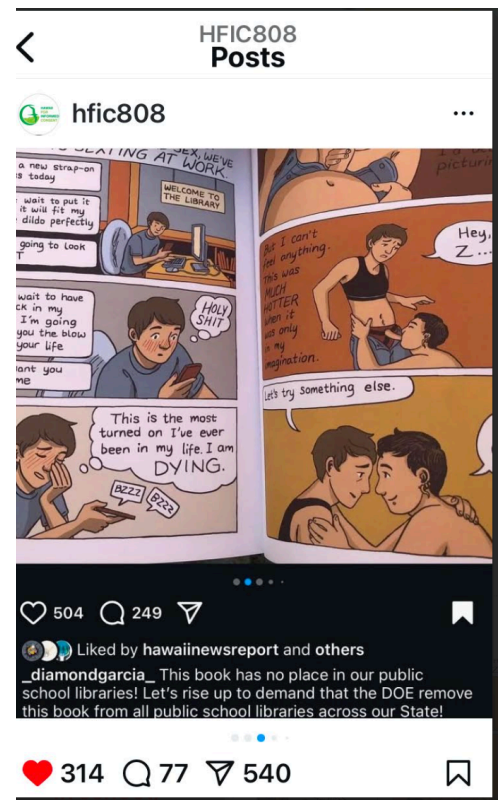
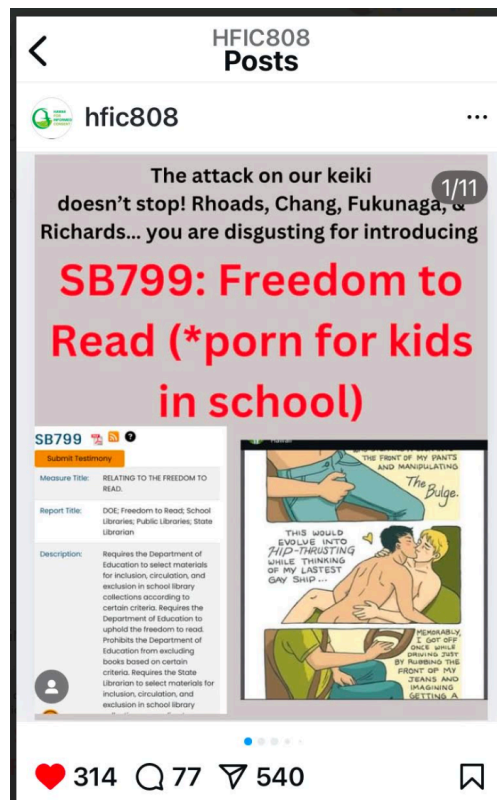
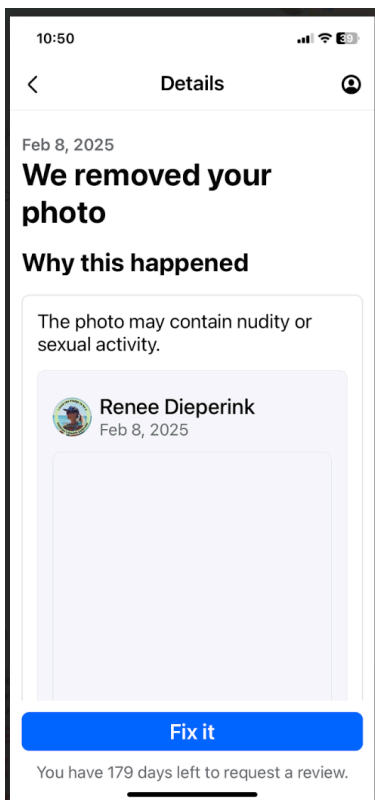
A better title for this bill would be: "Keep Porn in Schools!"

As an elementary school teacher I have seen numerous graphic novels become very popular with students in the last ten years. But some of those books are literally graphic and show our keiki pornography and content that they are not ready for age wise.

I have personally experienced my fourth grade students stumbling upon such matter, and being exposed to content that is NOT age appropriate. Our school immediately removed that book from our library!

Some people call that book banning, and I am appalled that they think it is totally okay to push this content on our kids. **Do you not have any morals?**

A post on social media that I reposted was banned and removed. So it's okay to expose our keiki to this content but not okay to post it on social media?



**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:05:28 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Christopher Gouveia	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I'm opposing SB799 because it would allow books that contain inappropriate content for children to be made available to children. Our government must be mindful of what is and isn't age appropriate for people to read.

This bill has nothing to do with having "freedom to read". We have always had that freedom. This bill is simply about harming our keiki under the guise of "education, diversity, social trends, etc."

Leave the keiki alone and stop pushing forward these sick and horrible bills that do absolutely nothing to benefit the people of Hawaii.

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:15:38 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Cheryl Bellamy	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Hawaii must join the growing list of states to pass legislation to prevent book bans. The Freedom to Read is constitutionally protected by the First Amendment of the US Constitution. Libraries and public schools have an important role and must be protected because they promote intellectual freedom and equitable access to knowledge and information.**

**Democracy requires an informed citizenry therefore we must protect access to knowledge and information so ensure that voters can make informed choices.**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:17:44 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Terri Gately	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this measure because individuals have the right to free inquiry and to form their own opinions.

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:19:00 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kim Cordery	Individual	Oppose	In Person

Comments:

I ADAMANTLY APPOSE SB799!

This bill is not about freedom!

This bill is about an agenda to allow graphic material that will increase promiscuity and promote pornography! This is absolutely an assault on our moral values!

NO NO NO! A'OLE!

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:18:48 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Emily Gale Moore	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Thankyou for listening to your constituents. Parents should be on committees to review books. We must protect the keiki from inappropriate literature for their age!

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:19:33 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Audrey Higbee	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**I support this measure because individuals have the right to free inquiry and a right to form their own opinions.**



**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:25:11 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
gary cordery	Testifying for I am testifying on Behalf of the 20k followers of the Aloha Freedom Coalition	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

We oppose this bill, it represents an agenda that undermines the fabric of Hawaii, its families and moral values limiting parents ability to constrain the influence of perverse sexual information. This bill violates the individual rights of parents who for whatever reason are not aware of its provisions. The DOE has the responsibility the educate the pupils on fundamental skills to accell in society. The "Freedom to read" bill is not a element of education. This is another attempt to normalize sexual behavior. This is the role is designated to the family. I challenge any legislator in Hawaii to read these books at a town hall. You would not! Why? You know it is gross and does not represent the aloha spirit nor the heart of Hawaii's family. VOTE NO, and stop being these types of bills forward.

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:21:33 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lani Primacio	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Oppose

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:28:01 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Zachariah Helenihi	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Three main reasons why I oppose this bill

1. Ambiguity in Criteria: The bill does not specify what “certain criteria” are for inclusion, circulation, or exclusion. This ambiguity could lead to inconsistent application across different schools and libraries, potentially undermining the very freedom to read it aims to protect. Without clear, objective standards, there’s room for personal or political biases to influence decisions.

2. Redundancy and Bureaucracy: Requiring both the Department of Education and the State Librarian to perform similar tasks might lead to redundancy, confusion, and increased administrative burden. This could divert resources from more pressing educational needs to bureaucratic oversight.

3. Potential for Misinterpretation: The mandate to “uphold the freedom to read” while simultaneously prohibiting exclusion “based on certain criteria” is inherently contradictory if those criteria are not clearly defined. What if one interpretation of “freedom to read” conflicts with another’s view of what constitutes inappropriate exclusion?

I urge the committee to reconsider this legislation or at least to clearly define the criteria in question to prevent misuse.

Thank you for your time and consideration

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:42:31 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
MANDY CHUN	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**I support this measure because individuals have the right to free inquiry and a right to form their own opinions**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:44:07 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Susan Duffy	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This proposed legislation undermines the fundamental rights of parents and local communities to have a say in the materials available to their children in public libraries. By centralizing the authority to the state department of education, this bill removes essential checks and balances, silencing parents and any creation of any type of local committees who are best positioned to understand the values and needs of their communities. Parents have the right to advocate for age-appropriate content in schools and libraries, ensuring that educational materials align with widely accepted educational and moral standards. Stripping them of this ability in favor of bureaucratic control sets a dangerous precedent, diminishing parental involvement in education and eroding local decision-making in favor of a one-size-fits-all approach dictated by the state.

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:52:59 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Candice	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This type of book DOES NOT BELONG in our school libraries or public libraries!! This book is pornographic and has no educational purposes!! Enough is Enough! Leave our children alone!

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 1:54:18 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Bart Burford	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Some of the so called "educational books/ literature" that would be acceptable if this hill passes is downright pornographic and deeply disturbing as a parent of three daughters.

I vehemently OPPOSE this dangerous and degenerate bill, and would request our tax dollars go toward education of the child, devoid of sexual, gender, and deviant influences.

I wonder if the people behind this bill have children of their own and if they threw lot know what's being implemented here...

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 2:01:32 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
teri skillman	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support the Freedom to Read Bill and ask that Hawaii join the growing list of states to pass legislation to prevent book bans because:

1. In 2023 over 4200 books in schools and public libraries were targeted for book bans in several states.
2. Hawaii must join the growing list of states to pass legislation to prevent book bans.
3. The Freedom to Read is constitutionally protected by the First Amendment of the US Constitution.
4. Individuals have the right to free inquiry and a right to form their own opinions.
5. Libraries and public schools have an important role and must be protected because they promote intellectual freedom and equitable access to knowledge and information.
6. Democracy requires an informed citizenry therefore we must protect access to knowledge and information so ensure that voters can make informed choices.

I am an educator and I know that diverse literature is crucial to a well-informed individual.

Mahalo nui,

Teri Skillman



**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 2:07:22 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kristen Kimball	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Opposition to SB799

February 9, 2025

Hello, I am writing testimony against Bill SB799. I very strongly oppose this bill and hope that our constituents will do the right thing and listen to the people. The indoctrination of our very young children goes against my moral and religious standards. Keeping children safe from inappropriate material should be part of organizational purposes of a library as it is funded by taxpayer money. I'm appalled this bill is even being considered.

Sincerely,

K. Kimball

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 2:10:22 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Rona Silva	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I OPPOSE SB799! What is wrong with you folks wanting to allow inappropriate books in school libraries for youth to read?! Absolutely disgusting. NO TO SB799!!!

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 2:11:26 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Dennis Silva	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I OPPOSE SB799, NOT ACCEPTABLE!

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 2:12:24 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Tryslynn Kauionalani Jones	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose this bill that exposes and exploits sexual content and ideology to children and teens. This is not freedom. These books are not appropriate for spaces that have children and teens who are still developing emotionally. This shouldn't be on the board for discussion.

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 2:17:57 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Yvonne Alvarado	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I Yvonne Alvarado Oppose to Bill SB799

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 2:18:05 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Noela von Wiegandt	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha,

I oppose SB799. This bill will allow our children easy access to books that have illustrated in comic book form basic pornography. I ask, why do you think it's important to allow K-12 students to read and see sexually explicit book content? This is an attempt to sexualize our children. Also, why is it that you folks want to remove a parental rights over say in what is clearly inappropriate reading material? Thank you.

Noela von Wiegandt

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 2:24:22 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Alika Valdez	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I support this bill.

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 2:27:45 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Misty Yee	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly condemn and oppose this bill. It does not promote freedom to read. It promotes pornography and a life of enslavement to depression, self-hate, anger, resentment, unhappiness, and addictions. We would be harming rather than providing freedom with this bill. We need to be responsible, care for what our children read and see. We must not let this bill pass. Thank you.



**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 2:27:59 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Carol Linde	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am support of the freedom to read. We deserve to access as wide a range of literature as we can possibly offer. It is through reading that we learn who we are and how to be in this world. Arbitrarily denying people access to reading materials is a disservice to our entire community and a dangerous attack on our rights. This issue is especially urgent given the federal attacks on DEI initiatives. Please vote to protect our freedom to read. Mahalo!

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 2:30:39 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Janice Hidano	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Oppose

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 2:33:02 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kelli Bolger	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing to express my strong support for SB799, which protects the freedom to read in Hawaii's public and school libraries. This bill is crucial for ensuring access to a diverse range of viewpoints and fostering intellectual freedom for all residents.

The bill's findings accurately reflect the alarming trend of significant increases in book bans across the country. These challenges often target books by or about marginalized groups, limiting access to diverse perspectives and experiences. This bill takes a proactive stance against this trend.

This legislation aligns with actions taken by other states, including California, Colorado, Illinois, Maryland, Minnesota, New Jersey, Vermont, and Washington, all of which have enacted legislation to protect the freedom to read. It also echoes concerns raised in Congress, such as Senate Resolution 857, which addresses the rise of book banning and threats to freedom of expression.

The bill's core provisions are essential. By mandating that selection of library materials be based on professional judgment and established guidelines, it ensures that decisions are made by qualified librarians, not based on personal biases or political pressure. Furthermore, the explicit prohibition against excluding or removing materials based on the author's race, nationality, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or political or social views is vital for protecting intellectual freedom and ensuring access to a wide range of perspectives. This language safeguards against censorship driven by partisan, ideological, or religious agendas.

This bill is not about forcing anyone to read something they don't want to read. It's about ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to access a wide range of materials and form their own opinions. It upholds the fundamental principles of intellectual freedom and open inquiry that are essential to a democratic society. I urge you to support this important legislation.

Mahalo,

Kelli Bolger

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 2:35:32 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
nick yee	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose this bill. It is deceiving ly promoted as freedom to read but in actuality it does not promote freedom at all. It promotes pornography and a life of enslavement to depression, self-hate, anger, resentment, unhappiness and addictions. We would be harming rather than providing freedom with this bill. We need to be responsible, care for what our children read and see. Do not let this bill pass. Thank you.

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 2:37:21 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Glen Miguel-Matsumoto	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**I absolutely oppose SB799.**

**The State Department of Education and state librarians SHALL NOT have the sole authority** of selecting and determining which books is appropriate for children of all grade levels. This bill **takes away transparency of the material available for children from the parents**. The job of the parents is to lovingly raise and discipline their own kids. Meaning, they have and should have the authority over their education. ALL parents must know what is being (and will be) taught to their children.

The bill states on page four that *"no books or other materials shall be excluded or removed because of the race, nationality, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or political or social views of the author, or due to partisan, ideological, or religious disapproval."* There are MANY explicit, inappropriate and dangerous material from these topics -- especially with "sexual orientation." **Parents MUST have the ultimate decision in determining if the material and books is appropriate to be taught / available -- not the state DOE or the state librarians.**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 2:42:17 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Leane Kaneko	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose! It is the parents kuleana to determine what their child should read.

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 2:44:41 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Alan Kaneko	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose. It is the parent's kuleana to determine what their child should read.

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 2:48:49 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
helen salvani	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose this bill. It is inappropriate to allow children to be exposed to this type of material at a young age! As a registered voter I strongly urge you to listen to the voice of the people and oppose this bill.



**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 2:49:05 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
William Lono	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly ***OPPOSE*** bill **SB799**. To the 4 senators (Rhoads, Fukunaga, Richards & Chang) who introduced this bill, should stop with the overreach. In one bill (**HB1118**) you wish to exempt religious beliefs to push our keiki to get vaccinated, while in this bill you allow our religion? Makes no sense.

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 2:53:01 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kehaulani Avicolti	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Aloha,

I am writing today in strong OPPOSITION of this bill SB 799. How wildly inappropriate that we even need to discuss this. Pornography in ANY form does not belong in our schools and in reach of CHILDREN. Adults can make their own decisions with their fully developed brains. Please vote NO on this bill.

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 2:59:15 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Erin Sonsona	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

When I was fired in 2022 as a HIDOE "highly qualified" 2x NBCT research librarian, only a FEW librarians were left at schools! **HIDOE did NOT want professionals questioning their FRAUD--** that was very evident. I vetted e-resources that the "State" bought that WERE compromised & **outright told LIES**. I followed up with the vendors--whom REFUSED to remove the DECEPTIVE information. The "science" pushed during the FRAUD planned-demic was also NOT legit, and I provided primary sources verifying my claims.

There's also NO librarian at #SchoolLibraryServices' helm to call the shots. It's ALL by design. HIDOE \*requires\* school librarians to have 2 degrees; Education BS + school library MLIS. So given the EXTENSIVE GUTTING of "highly qualified" school librarians, how MANY are left & WHAT are the "credentials" of those working in school libraries & determining resources NOW? 😞

Their 2020 School Literacy Plan ([https://www.hawaiiip20.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Hawaii-State-Literacy-Plan\\_WEB.pdf](https://www.hawaiiip20.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Hawaii-State-Literacy-Plan_WEB.pdf)) says schools are to ENSURE there's HIGHLY qualified, dual certified librarians & also resources. YET they've done the OPPOSITE. **So again, WHO'S VETTING the resources?**

There WAS a LIB position available at #KaimukiHS in which the retiree recommended my placement. Yet the principal wanted to hire from mainland/newly UH grad. Why? 😞

Here's one potential reason... "Teach For America" Hawai'i

(<https://www.teachforamerica.org/hawaii>)s mission is to ...support EQUITY-oriented leaders to transform education & expand opportunity for all children. ONLY need 2.5GPA & can be a foreigner.

**TIME TO HOLD THE HIDOE & #NOTreaty #StateOfHawaii RESPONSIBLE FOR THE HORRIBLE #INFILTRATION & #INDOCTRINATION OF OUR CHILDREN. NOT PONO.**

**LATE**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 3:08:08 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Joseph Francher	Testifying for Friends of WAHIAWA Library	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

We support this bill.



Hawai'i Association of School Librarians  
HASLcontactus@gmail.com

Testimony to the House Committee on Education  
Monday, February 10, 2025 3:00 PM

**RE: HB 799, Relating to the freedom to read.**

Aloha Chair Woodson, Vice Chair La Chica, and Members of the Committee:

The Hawai'i Association of School Librarians (HASL) **strongly supports HB 799** and protecting intellectual freedom in our schools. As school librarians, it is our role to “Provide materials which reflect the broad ideas and beliefs of religious, social, political, historical, and ethnic groups and their contribution to the local, national and world heritages and cultures, thereby enabling students to develop intellectual integrity in forming sound judgments,” (from the Hawai'i Department of Education Library Materials Selection Policy). Restricting access based on viewpoint or ideology undermines this fundamental purpose.

It is our position that students deserve a safe space to explore different perspectives, even those that might be challenging. Censoring books and other resources limits their ability to develop an understanding of the world. Furthermore, challenges to books target marginalized communities (47% of book challenges according to the 2023 ALA report), further isolating and silencing our most vulnerable students.

Books and media should instead act as both mirrors and windows - validating students' own life experiences *and* fostering empathy for those with different points-of-view. A truly *safe* learning environment reflects the perspectives (and *existence*) of all students.

School and state librarians continue to review, recommend, and select materials that are age relevant, curriculum aligned, and intellectually engaging for our keiki. We take our role in our schools and communities seriously and hope that our lawmakers will stand with us to enshrine intellectual freedom as a cornerstone of a literate society.

**We urge you to pass HB 799** in support of Hawai'i students and communities.

Mahalo,  
Renea Ruark  
President  
Hawai'i Association of School Librarians

**LATE**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 3:35:44 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Kathy Hong	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Dear Committee Members on Education,

I am writing to express my opposition to the bill that requires the Department of Education and the State Librarian to select materials for inclusion, circulation, and exclusion in school library collections according to certain criteria. Specifically, I am concerned with the bill's mandate to uphold the freedom to read while simultaneously prohibiting the exclusion of books based on certain criteria, as it could lead to unintended and harmful consequences for students, families, and the educational environment.

As an engaged and concerned parent, teacher, community member, and advocate for the well-being of children, I believe it is critical to approach the selection of materials for school libraries with great care and responsibility. I fully support the importance of ensuring that students have access to diverse ideas and perspectives and that their freedom to read is respected. However, I also strongly believe that there is a fundamental need to protect children from accessing materials that are developmentally inappropriate, explicit, or harmful.

### **Protecting Students from Pornographic and Inappropriate Content**

A core concern I have with this bill is its potential to inadvertently allow access to books that contain explicit or pornographic content that is wholly unsuitable for children and adolescents. Schools serve as spaces for learning, growth, and development, and it is crucial that school libraries reflect this mission. While some may argue that the freedom to read should not be curtailed, it is essential to recognize that not all content is appropriate for every age group. Books that contain explicit sexual content, graphic depictions of violence, or other material that can be damaging to young minds must be carefully reviewed and considered for inclusion based on the maturity and developmental level of students.

We must draw a clear line between promoting intellectual freedom and protecting children from exposure to harmful material. It is not unreasonable to demand that libraries exclude materials that may be considered pornographic or highly inappropriate for their intended audience. Books that are meant for adults or contain material that is sexually explicit, graphically violent, or otherwise inappropriate for children should not be readily available to students in K-12 schools. These kinds of materials can potentially create confusion,

trauma, and undue stress for young students who are not developmentally ready to process such content.

It is particularly troubling that the bill does not provide adequate safeguards to ensure that materials in school libraries meet age-appropriate standards. By requiring the Department of Education and the State Librarian to uphold the freedom to read while also prohibiting the exclusion of books based on certain criteria, there is a risk of placing too much emphasis on the idea of unrestricted access to books at the expense of the emotional and psychological well-being of children. It is essential that material selection prioritizes the best interests of students, including protecting their mental and emotional health by preventing exposure to content that can be damaging or confusing.

### **Ensuring Age-Appropriateness in Educational Materials**

One of the primary roles of school libraries is to support the educational development of students by providing access to materials that are relevant to their academic growth and personal development. In fulfilling this role, school libraries must ensure that the content they offer aligns with the age, maturity, and developmental stage of the students they serve.

It is essential that books and materials selected for school libraries are carefully evaluated to ensure that they meet these developmental standards. Developmentally inappropriate materials—whether they contain graphic depictions of violence, sexually explicit content, or themes that are too complex for the age group—can undermine a student’s emotional and psychological well-being. It is not an act of censorship, but rather a responsible and necessary action to ensure that students have access to resources that support their educational journey without causing confusion or harm.

### **The Need for Local Input and Parental Oversight**

In addition to the concerns outlined above, I also believe that local input and parental oversight play a crucial role in the selection of school library materials. Parents are the first and foremost educators of their children, and they should have a voice in decisions related to the materials their children are exposed to. This bill does not provide sufficient provisions for parental input, nor does it take into account the potential for local school boards and communities to make decisions that reflect their values and the specific needs of their students.

Each community is unique, and the needs of students can vary significantly depending on the demographics and culture of the area. What may be appropriate for one district may not be suitable for another. A one-size-fits-all approach to library materials can inadvertently lead to the inclusion of content that is out of step with local community standards and values. As such, I strongly believe that school districts and local communities should retain the authority to make decisions about library materials in collaboration with parents, educators, and other stakeholders.

**It is also important to note that parents often provide essential context for understanding what is appropriate for their children. Many parents have strong opinions about what materials are acceptable for their children to access in school libraries. By allowing greater parental involvement in the selection process, we can create a more balanced and responsible approach to material selection that reflects the needs and values of the community while still upholding the right to freedom of thought and expression.**

## **Conclusion**

**In conclusion, I respectfully oppose the bill that requires the Department of Education and the State Librarian to select materials for school library collections according to certain criteria while upholding the freedom to read. Although I value intellectual freedom and the right to explore diverse perspectives, I believe it is essential that we also safeguard children from harmful content, including pornographic or developmentally inappropriate material, in school libraries. It is not a matter of censorship, but rather a matter of protecting the well-being of students and ensuring that the materials they access support their academic and emotional development in an age-appropriate manner.**

**I urge you to consider these concerns as you review this bill and to take the necessary steps to ensure that school libraries maintain a balanced, responsible approach to material selection that prioritizes the health and well-being of students above all else.**

**Thank you for your time and consideration.**

**Sincerely,**

**Kathy Hong**



**LATE**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 4:16:38 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Erik	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

Legislator's,

I oppose this bill. I oppose selection of books for school children based on new insights, societal trends, diversity, etc. I am for books being chosen by the agreement of the majority and not by the will of the few, such as in the republic of the United States of America. I am for selection of books for children that will shield children and teens somewhat until they are 18, the age of a legal adult in Hawaii.

Sincerely,

Erik Eck

**LATE**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 4:14:38 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kathryn Young	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I have had students approach me expressing shock and confusion over books they've found in our library. They described these books as containing sexually explicit content, and in their words, 'inappropriate and pornographic.' I was taken aback by their concerns and suggested they talk to their parents about it. While I haven't personally seen these materials, in the library, I am committed to looking into this matter further to ensure we are providing a safe and appropriate environment for all students.

**LATE**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 3:23:03 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lora Burbage	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha!

I am in opposition to this bill because it gives too much subjective power, (Line 16 page 5), according to the "professional judgement" of the selector...

I see criteria on the following page but that is too broad and inappropriate material could be added to the libraires selection.

Mahalo,

Lora

**LATE**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 3:26:36 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Alyson M Miles	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Aloha e Honorable Members of the Legislature,**

As a parent and an educator I SUPPORT this measure because the FREEDOM TO READ is a right protected by the First Ammendment of the U.S. Constitution. I oppose book bans in any form, knowing that in 2023 over 4200 books were targeted for bans in public schools and libraries. Bans attacked books from "Captain Underpants" to "I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings," depriving our citizens and youth of diverse perspectives and information. Seeing the nonsense and outright unconstitutional book bans that have occurred in other states, I believe it is important to support our public libraries and public schools because they provide equitable access to information and knowledge. Banning ideas by banning books is decidedly UNAMERICAN and deprives citizens of their First Ammendment rights. Help keep Hawai'i moving forward, educating our citizens to think for themselves and thrive by exposure and freedom to choose what they will read.

I support this measure because individuals have the right to free inquiry and a right to form their own opinions.

Mahalo for your time and consideration. Do what is PONO, ensure that we retain our constitutional rights.

Sincerely,

Alyson M. Miles

**LATE**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 3:55:15 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Barbara Brown	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I do not think children in school should be exposed to reading material in the classroom or library that is inappropriate and in opposition to a parent's values. Parents need to have a voice in such exposure! I do not want my tax dollars going to buy books on transgender and other alternate life styles.

**LATE**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 4:02:10 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Maly Gella	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am in Strong Opposition of this bill. The "adults" in the room cannot be trusted to know what is appropriate and what is outright inappropriate for our children. Their track record speaks louder than anything I could say. When parents attempt to put screenshots of "Graphic Novels" on social media it is removed! But it's ok to put it in libraries for our children?!? Please do the right thing and Oppose this bill, Thank You!

**LATE**



## Protect Democracy Move Forward

[www.indivisiblehawaii.org](http://www.indivisiblehawaii.org)

[info@indivisiblehawaii.org](mailto:info@indivisiblehawaii.org)

To: Michelle N. Kodani, Chair, Education Committee  
Hearing Date/Time: February 10, 2025, 3:02 PM  
Place: Hawaii State Capitol, Room 229  
Re: Testimony in STRONG SUPPORT/SUPPORT of SB799

Dear Chair Kodani and the Members of Committee,

Members of Indivisible Hawai'i thank you for this opportunity to testify in strong support/support of SB799, which would preserve our libraries from censorship efforts. There is no question that America is facing severe divisions in society. That division has been reflected in efforts in Hawaii to object to content contained in our libraries, particular in some of our public school libraries.

A free society benefits from a vigorous exchange of ideas, from discussions and sharing of opinions and beliefs, and from working together to reach a better understanding of the concerns of fellow citizens. There is no place in a democracy for censorship. The public library must be a place where any person can have access to uncensored books, periodicals, newspapers and the like, where any person can freely read a wide variety of materials. As the American Library Association has stated in its Freedom to Read statement, "[i]t is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those that are unorthodox, unpopular, or considered dangerous by the majority." We cannot have an educated citizenry if our citizens cannot have access to read what they want to read. As President Dwight Eisenhower once said, "The libraries of America are and must ever remain the home of free and inquiring minds. To them, our citizens - of all ages and races, of all creeds and persuasions - must be able to turn with clear confidence that there they can freely seek the whole truth, unvarnished by fashion and uncompromised by expediency."

Please approve SB799 and work to assure its passage as law.

Sincerely,

Diana L. Van De Car  
for Indivisible Hawai'i

*We're a grassroots movement of thousands of local Indivisible groups with a mission to elect progressive leaders, rebuild our democracy, and defeat the Trump agenda. In Hawai'i, we have ten groups across four islands, representing over a thousand pro-democracy citizens.*



**LATE**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 8:53:21 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Joel Houck	Testifying for DOE Teacher	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Out libraries need strict standards on what will be truly beneficial to our students growth in a postivie direction.

I came across a graphic novel/comic in our middle school library years ago. I was curious why a book with senseless violence depicted on cover would be on the display rack in our library and thumbed through it. The villan and his henchmen where masacaring people with gunfire, blood and guts everywhere. The next pages showed the villan physiclly assaulting a scantly clad woman in sexually suggestive ways. I was shocked to find it and took it to the principal. Principial agreed with me that it was inappropriate for our students and to put it back in the library. There was nothing we could do about it. Freedom to read I guess? This sends a mixed message to our students.

Our school libraries should be more appropriate than what we know our students' are looking at on their smart phones.

**LATE**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 4:47:58 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Cindy R Ajimine	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I STRONGLY OPPOSE this bill.

Freedom to Read? The US Constitution grants adults (and includes parents who are of not abusive) these freedoms. Freedoms and rights of children are not even in place in our State Constitution. Thus, we must protect our children to ensure their safety and freedom from abuse. Education is supposed to be for the "good" of the child, what is best for the age of the child, and subject to parental information and rights. A library is not age restricted. This bill opens young children to what could very well be deemed unsafe practices and sexual abuse and promotion as it covers kindergarten to high school. Policies must vary for this broad age range; there is already a significant pornography problem among young people.

DOE and BOE are appointed and easily subject to the influences of the appointees -- not parents/children. Library employees can easily be subjected and forced to do what is against their beliefs or to promote poor beliefs if all three entities are forced to follow this bill. Freedom to read? Subject to the whims of non-elected people who hold too much power with little to no accountability to notify and report to parents. Bill as worded excludes "historical" and only addresses "(new/current) community interests and concerns, local, national and international issues and events, publishing trends, new insights, and societal trends, and provide a broad and relevant collection that reflects the diversity of the State.

**LATE**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 4:48:14 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Leinani Hong	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee Members on Education,

I am writing to express my opposition to the bill that requires the Department of Education and the State Librarian to select materials for inclusion, circulation, and exclusion in school library collections according to certain criteria. Specifically, I am concerned with the bill’s mandate to uphold the freedom to read while simultaneously prohibiting the exclusion of books based on certain criteria, as it could lead to unintended and harmful consequences for students, families, and the educational environment.

As an engaged and concerned parent, teacher, community member, and advocate for the well-being of children, I believe it is critical to approach the selection of materials for school libraries with great care and responsibility. I fully support the importance of ensuring that students have access to diverse ideas and perspectives and that their freedom to read is respected. However, I also strongly believe that there is a fundamental need to protect children from accessing materials that are developmentally inappropriate, explicit, or harmful.

**Protecting Students from Pornographic and Inappropriate Content**

A core concern I have with this bill is its potential to inadvertently allow access to books that contain explicit or pornographic content that is wholly unsuitable for children and adolescents. Schools serve as spaces for learning, growth, and development, and it is crucial that school libraries reflect this mission. While some may argue that the freedom to read should not be curtailed, it is essential to recognize that not all content is appropriate for every age group. Books that contain explicit sexual content, graphic depictions of violence, or other material that can be damaging to young minds must be carefully reviewed and considered for inclusion based on the maturity and developmental level of students.

We must draw a clear line between promoting intellectual freedom and protecting children from exposure to harmful material. It is not unreasonable to demand that libraries exclude materials that may be considered pornographic or highly inappropriate for their intended audience. Books that are meant for adults or contain material that is sexually explicit, graphically violent, or otherwise inappropriate for children should not be readily available to students in K-12 schools. These kinds of materials can potentially create confusion, trauma, and undue stress for young students who are not developmentally ready to process such content.

It is particularly troubling that the bill does not provide adequate safeguards to ensure that materials in school libraries meet age-appropriate standards. By requiring the Department of Education and the State Librarian to uphold the freedom to read while also prohibiting the exclusion of books based on certain criteria, there is a risk of placing too much emphasis on the idea of unrestricted access to books at the expense of the emotional and psychological well-being of children. It is essential that material selection prioritizes the best interests of

students, including protecting their mental and emotional health by preventing exposure to content that can be damaging or confusing.

#### Ensuring Age-Appropriateness in Educational Materials

One of the primary roles of school libraries is to support the educational development of students by providing access to materials that are relevant to their academic growth and personal development. In fulfilling this role, school libraries must ensure that the content they offer aligns with the age, maturity, and developmental stage of the students they serve.

It is essential that books and materials selected for school libraries are carefully evaluated to ensure that they meet these developmental standards. Developmentally inappropriate materials—whether they contain graphic depictions of violence, sexually explicit content, or themes that are too complex for the age group—can undermine a student’s emotional and psychological well-being. It is not an act of censorship, but rather a responsible and necessary action to ensure that students have access to resources that support their educational journey without causing confusion or harm.

#### The Need for Local Input and Parental Oversight

In addition to the concerns outlined above, I also believe that local input and parental oversight play a crucial role in the selection of school library materials. Parents are the first and foremost educators of their children, and they should have a voice in decisions related to the materials their children are exposed to. This bill does not provide sufficient provisions for parental input, nor does it take into account the potential for local school boards and communities to make decisions that reflect their values and the specific needs of their students.

Each community is unique, and the needs of students can vary significantly depending on the demographics and culture of the area. What may be appropriate for one district may not be suitable for another. A one-size-fits-all approach to library materials can inadvertently lead to the inclusion of content that is out of step with local community standards and values. As such, I strongly believe that school districts and local communities should retain the authority to make decisions about library materials in collaboration with parents, educators, and other stakeholders.

It is also important to note that parents often provide essential context for understanding what is appropriate for their children. Many parents have strong opinions about what materials are acceptable for their children to access in school libraries. By allowing greater parental involvement in the selection process, we can create a more balanced and responsible approach to material selection that reflects the needs and values of the community while still upholding the right to freedom of thought and expression.

#### Conclusion

In conclusion, I respectfully oppose the bill that requires the Department of Education and the State Librarian to select materials for school library collections according to certain criteria while upholding the freedom to read. Although I value intellectual freedom and the right to explore diverse perspectives, I believe it is essential that we also safeguard children from harmful content, including pornographic or developmentally inappropriate material, in school libraries. It is not a matter of censorship, but rather a matter of protecting the well-being of students and ensuring that the materials they access support their academic and emotional development in an age-appropriate manner.

I urge you to consider these concerns as you review this bill and to take the necessary steps to ensure that school libraries maintain a balanced, responsible approach to material selection that prioritizes the health and well-being of students above all else.

Thank you for your time and consideration.  
Sincerely,

Leinani Hong

**LATE**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 5:39:53 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Tim Huycke	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I very strongly support SB799.

**LATE**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 5:59:52 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
lois	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Stop this bill!

This bill exclusively eliminates any guidance from parents, stepping in the direction of dictatorship.

This is wrong and you know it . If you know kids, nieces, nephews, eighbors, etc, you would not want to be the sole person saying what to or not to read. If you are a parent, you know the responsibility is yours in guiding your child's ability to develop healthy and responsible habits and decisions.

Vote NO !

**LATE**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 6:17:51 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Terri Yoshinaga	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Please do not pass this bill. It is morally wrong are you perverts trying to influence our children. We need to keep our children safe. Praying that all evil will come to light and everyone will see your motives for writing this bill. What is the matter with you?



**LATE**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 6:19:13 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Hilary Smith	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

As a published author and editor living in Hawaii, I support this bill. As over 4,200 books faced banning attempts in schools and public libraries across multiple states in 2023, it's crucial for Hawaii to join other states in passing the Freedom to Read Bill to protect against book bans, upholding the First Amendment's constitutional guarantee of free inquiry and opinion formation. Libraries and public schools play a vital role in promoting intellectual freedom and ensuring equitable access to knowledge and information, which must be protected. This protection of access to information is fundamental to maintaining an informed citizenry that can make educated decisions, which is essential for a functioning democracy.

**LATE**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 6:38:27 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Dorinda Ohelo	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill

**LATE**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 6:53:59 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Cheryl Rzonca	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose SB799. Inappropriate books and reading materials should not be in our schools. Put some parents on the committee of who decides what books should be in our school libraries.

**LATE**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 7:05:00 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Elyse Warren	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose this bill.

**LATE**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 7:09:01 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Steve Glanstein	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill is not complicated. It provides an additional level of protection that is sorely missing in several other states in the United States. Tragically, there are moves to ban books and redefine the freedom to read as a parent or religious group's "freedom" to impose their views on the rest of our keiki. Please protect us form book banning in our state and approve this legislation

**LATE**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 7:37:22 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
George Timoteo	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am testifying in **strong opposition** to SB799. While I support the fundamental right to read and access information, this bill takes an extreme approach that removes necessary safeguards in school libraries. It strips away local control from educators, parents, and administrators, forcing schools to adopt a one-size-fits-all policy that may allow inappropriate or harmful materials to remain in circulation.

**SB799 prohibits the Department of Education and the State Librarian from excluding books based on certain criteria**, limiting their ability to ensure that school library collections are age-appropriate and aligned with educational standards. This undermines the role of educators and school administrators, who are best equipped to determine what materials serve students' needs. It also removes accountability, preventing communities from having a say in what is deemed suitable for their children.

Schools must have the ability to **review, select, and remove** books based on **age-appropriateness, educational value, and community standards**. SB799's restrictions could force schools to keep books with graphic, explicit, or controversial content, regardless of whether they are suitable for young readers. While intellectual freedom is important, it should not come at the cost of responsible curation and parental involvement in a child's education.

I urge lawmakers to reject SB799 and instead support policies that maintain local control, protect educational integrity, and allow schools to make decisions that reflect the needs of their students and communities.

Mahalo for your time and consideration

**LATE**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 7:38:42 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Ryan Willis	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I Strongly Oppose

**LATE**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 7:58:37 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jada Rufo	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

My name is Jada Rufo. I am an author of three books titled *Banana Girl: An American Woman's Life in China*, *The Zone*, and *May and the Monster*.

I'm currently working on another book, a historical novel. It takes place during World War 2 Hawaii. To do the proper research I need to have a well equipped library that has the resources I need. I have borrowed books about plantation life in Hawaii to travel books to books about the Nanjing Massacre. My local library, Thelma Parker Memorial Library, has been an indispensable part of my research. To have such a library that offers all kinds of books from authors with different perspectives is an invaluable part of our Waimea community.



**LATE**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 8:11:40 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Josh Lockhart	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I do not support this

**LATE**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 8:51:39 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Kanoë Willis	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I Strongly Oppose

**LATE**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 9:00:47 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Tanya Dean	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am writing in support of SB 799. Please do everything you can to protect the important role of school librarians and public librarians who have the expertise to maintain the "freedom of reading" and access to material that represents all. I am an educator who knows the importance of protecting diversity and inclusion in Hawai'i's libraries and schools.

**LATE**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 9:18:18 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Doug Pasnik	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**Opposition to SB799 – A Reckless Attack on Child Protection**

SB799 recklessly strips away safeguards, allowing sexually explicit and inappropriate content into school libraries under the guise of "intellectual freedom." This bill removes all barriers to protecting children from pornographic material, ensuring that no book—no matter how graphic—can be removed based on its content.

By eliminating local oversight and parental rights, SB799 deliberately forces schools to retain materials that would be unacceptable in any other child-focused environment. This is not about education—it's about pushing explicit, ideologically driven content into the hands of minors with no accountability.

Reject SB799 to protect children from dangerous, predatory policies disguised as "freedom to read." Schools should be places of learning, not platforms for the forced exposure of minors to sexual content. This bill is a malicious attempt to override parental authority and normalize inappropriate materials in education. Demand its defeat.

**LATE**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 9:21:48 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Lisa Kaulukou	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I am submitting testimony and **strong opposition** to SB799. While I support the importance of providing diverse and inclusive literature in schools and public libraries, this bill removes critical oversight and safeguards to protect children from inappropriate content.

SB 799 grandes **sole authority** to the Department of Education and state librarians to determine which books are included in school and public libraries, with no mechanism for community input, parental review, or age-appropriate considerations. By preventing the removal of books based on any criteria--including sexually explicit or inappropriate material-- this bill **eliminates accountability** and ignores the responsibility we have to ensure children's reading materials are educational, age-appropriate, and aligned with community values.

This bill claims to support intellectual freedom but disregards the **need for balance** in school library collections. Schools and public libraries serve **minors**, and it is **not censorship** to establish guidelines that ensure materials are developmentally appropriate. Parents and educators have a duty to protect children from exposure to explicit or harmful content, I am SB799 undermines that responsibility.

Additionally, by prioritizing "new insights" and "social trends" over **educational, merit and age suitability**, this bill creates a **subjective standard** for book selection, potentially allowing controversial or explicit content to enter school libraries under the guise of diversity and inclusion.

I strongly urge this committee to reject SB799 'and consider a more balanced approach that allows for **appropriate oversight, community input, and clear guidelines** for school library collections. Students deserve access to enriching and informative books, but not at the expense of their well-being and safety.

thank you for your time and consideration.

**LATE**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:06:06 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lionel Delos Santos	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha legislature i oppoesed bill sb799 because porn should not be allow in kids or any libraries.

.

thank you

**LATE**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:23:26 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Tiana Laranio	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This is absolutely appalling to have children expose to this type of literature. Please vote a strong NO. Thank you very much! May God be your guide. God bless. Aloha

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:23:55 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sharie Ono	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

NO!



**LATE**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:30:49 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lauren Igawa	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill

**LATE**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:31:00 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Charlene Mersburgh	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose to having the DOE and libraries having sole authority of what books are to be provided.

**LATE**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:33:57 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Janice Johnson	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly OPPOSE this vague and misleading Bill, especially containing the words, "certain criteria". There needs to be more transparency so as not to elude a hidden agenda that will be detrimental to the fundamental learnings for our children, their future, and future generations!! Corruption of the mind of the innocent does not belong in any part of the DOE!!

**LATE**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:45:01 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lisa Tekurio	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose SB799. Stop bringing all of your pretty words to try to hide your obvious agenda to indoctrinate our children with your filth. You need to have a perverted mind to think this should even be discussed - what a waste of time. We have homeless to the hilt, a housing crisis, and one of the most expensive states to exist in and you're wasting people's time with this! Can you think of ways to save your constituents money maybe? Try that. I bet you didn't run on this when you campaigned for your office.

I oppose SB799.

Lisa Tekurio

**LATE**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:45:19 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Reina Loughlin	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Strongly oppose. Those who support this bill shouldn't be trusted around children. It is imperative to recognize the sacred innocence of a growing and developing child, and the danger and irresponsibility of bill.

**LATE**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/9/2025 10:57:44 PM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
Fha96744@gmail.com	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose Bill SB799 on having pornography books in our kids libraries at school. They were never allowed before and they shouldn't be allowed now. As a parent and citizen, I oppose this bill and am disappointed at the elects that try to bring this disgusting education to my children. Our kids need to focus on their primary education: math, language arts, etc. These pornography books would distract our kids from staying focus on what matters in their education! I stand firm on my decision and testimony to oppose Bill SB799!

**LATE**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 2:33:10 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jessica Kuzmier	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha, I support this bill because I believe it's the First Amendment, and people have a right to form their own opinions without interference. Mahalo.

**LATE**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 3:58:49 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Devon Rackley	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Dear Committee Members on Education,

I am writing to express my opposition to the bill that requires the Department of Education and the State Librarian to select materials for inclusion, circulation, and exclusion in school library collections according to certain criteria. Specifically, I am concerned with the bill’s mandate to uphold the freedom to read while simultaneously prohibiting the exclusion of books based on certain criteria, as it could lead to unintended and harmful consequences for students, families, and the educational environment.

As an engaged and concerned parent, teacher, community member, and advocate for the well-being of children, I believe it is critical to approach the selection of materials for school libraries with great care and responsibility. I fully support the importance of ensuring that students have access to diverse ideas and perspectives and that their freedom to read is respected. However, I also strongly believe that there is a fundamental need to protect children from accessing materials that are developmentally inappropriate, explicit, or harmful.

**Protecting Students from Pornographic and Inappropriate Content**

A core concern I have with this bill is its potential to inadvertently allow access to books that contain explicit or pornographic content that is wholly unsuitable for children and adolescents. Schools serve as spaces for learning, growth, and development, and it is crucial that school libraries reflect this mission. While some may argue that the freedom to read should not be



curtailed, it is essential to recognize that not all content is appropriate for every age group. Books that contain explicit sexual content, graphic depictions of violence, or other material that can be damaging to young minds must be carefully reviewed and considered for inclusion based on the maturity and developmental level of students.

We must draw a clear line between promoting intellectual freedom and protecting children from exposure to harmful material. It is not unreasonable to demand that libraries exclude materials that may be considered pornographic or highly inappropriate for their intended audience. Books that are meant for adults or contain material that is sexually explicit, graphically violent, or otherwise inappropriate for children should not be readily available to students in K-12 schools. These kinds of materials can potentially create confusion, trauma, and undue stress for young students who are not developmentally ready to process such content.

It is particularly troubling that the bill does not provide adequate safeguards to ensure that materials in school libraries meet age-appropriate standards. By requiring the Department of Education and the State Librarian to uphold the freedom to read while also prohibiting the exclusion of books based on certain criteria, there is a risk of placing too much emphasis on the idea of unrestricted access to books at the expense of the emotional and psychological well-being of children. It is essential that material selection prioritizes the best interests of students, including protecting their mental and emotional health by preventing exposure to content that can be damaging or confusing.

#### Ensuring Age-Appropriateness in Educational Materials

One of the primary roles of school libraries is to support the educational development of students by providing access to materials that are relevant to their academic growth and personal development. In fulfilling this role, school libraries must ensure that the content they

offer aligns with the age, maturity, and developmental stage of the students they serve.

It is essential that books and materials selected for school libraries are carefully evaluated to ensure that they meet these developmental standards. Developmentally inappropriate materials—whether they contain graphic depictions of violence, sexually explicit content, or themes that are too complex for the age group—can undermine a student’s emotional and psychological well-being. It is not an act of censorship, but rather a responsible and necessary action to ensure that students have access to resources that support their educational journey without causing confusion or harm.

#### The Need for Local Input and Parental Oversight

In addition to the concerns outlined above, I also believe that local input and parental oversight play a crucial role in the selection of school library materials. Parents are the first and foremost educators of their children, and they should have a voice in decisions related to the materials their children are exposed to. This bill does not provide sufficient provisions for parental input, nor does it take into account the potential for local school boards and communities to make decisions that reflect their values and the specific needs of their students.

Each community is unique, and the needs of students can vary significantly depending on the demographics and culture of the area. What may be appropriate for one district may not be suitable for another. A one-size-fits-all approach to library materials can inadvertently lead to the inclusion of content that is out of step with local community standards and values. As such, I strongly believe that school districts and local communities should retain the authority to make decisions about library materials in collaboration with parents, educators, and other stakeholders.

It is also important to note that parents often provide essential context for understanding what is

appropriate for their children. Many parents have strong opinions about what materials are acceptable for their children to access in school libraries. By allowing greater parental involvement in the selection process, we can create a more balanced and responsible approach to material selection that reflects the needs and values of the community while still upholding the right to freedom of thought and expression.

#### Conclusion

In conclusion, I respectfully oppose the bill that requires the Department of Education and the State Librarian to select materials for school library collections according to certain criteria while upholding the freedom to read. Although I value intellectual freedom and the right to explore diverse perspectives, I believe it is essential that we also safeguard children from harmful content, including pornographic or developmentally inappropriate material, in school libraries. It is not a matter of censorship, but rather a matter of protecting the well-being of students and ensuring that the materials they access support their academic and emotional development in an age-appropriate manner.

I urge you to consider these concerns as you review this bill and to take the necessary steps to ensure that school libraries maintain a balanced, responsible approach to material selection that prioritizes the health and well-being of students above all else.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Devon Rackley

**LATE**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 4:25:31 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Tiare Smith	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

I strongly opposed SB799.

Parents all across the Nation and in Hawaii have been fighting to keep inappropriate books out of school libraries and out of the children's section in public libraries. This Bill aims to undo all of that progress in Hawaii and put it into law that parents have no say over which books are appropriate for their children to have access.

Mahalo,

Tiare Smith

**LATE**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 6:34:13 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
David E Shormann	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

The legislators who wrote this claim to be wise, but they have become foolish promoters of wickedness. Praying for them! Education in a righteous state is from the bottom up, not top down, with librarians having sole authority on books.

**LATE**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 6:41:48 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Katja Bajema	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Honorable Chair, Vice Chair and committee members,

My name is Katja Bajema and I am a mother of 3. I OPPOSE this bill, not because certain books should be banned as a whole, but because certain topics should not be in school libraries such as pornographic content. Even if it's supposed to be inclusive of certain groups. It is just a trojan horse to get inappropriate content in the hands of children. Just like movies have age restrictions, so should it be for books.

Please oppose this bill and do not take the rights from parents to decide when their child is ready for more mature content.

Thank you

**LATE**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 8:18:10 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Skyler Riela	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and members of the Committee,

I am writing in **strong support of SB799**, which upholds the fundamental freedom to read in our public and school libraries. This bill is essential in protecting access to diverse books, ensuring that students and the public continue to engage with a wide range of perspectives, and tells the world that book bans have no place in Hawaii.

In recent years, there has been a growing trend of book bans across the country, restricting access to materials based on ideological and political objections. Hawaii must take action to prevent such censorship from undermining intellectual freedom and societal advancement. SB799 aligns our state with others, including California, Illinois, and Washington, that have enacted similar protections against book bans.

Our libraries play a crucial role in fostering education, critical thinking, and democracy. This bill ensures that books are not removed or banned due to the political, religious, or personal beliefs of a vocal minority, protecting the right of all individuals—especially students—to explore literature, history, and ideas that reflect the full diversity of our state and the world.

I urge the Legislature to pass SB799 to protect our libraries, our educators, and our fundamental right to read without fear of censorship.

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Skyler Riela

**LATE**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 8:11:29 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Jessica	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Kākou,

My name is Jess Sobocinski and I am writing in strong support of this measure. I am currently a public school teacher, and one who believes that a robust and well-informed history and civics education curriculum is essential to my role in preparing students to be responsible, engaged citizens who contribute to their families and communities in a positive way.

Censorship and "book-banning" of any kind along the lines of controversial issues such as gender/sexual orientation, political or religious affiliations, ethnic/racial backgrounds or origins, or cultural identities/beliefs severely undercuts first amendment rights and leads to a society that is unable to engage in discourse or navigate through conflict. Exposure to texts or stories from people's whose lives, perspectives, or opinion differ from our own is critical in helping us be curious, empathetic, and diplomatic in our thinking. It creates a foudnation from which we can make compromises and decisions that meet our collective needs and develop solutions for our collective challenges.

Mahalo for your work on this. I am proud to be a teacher and citizen of a place that upholds these values of free speech and critical thinking.

~Jess



**LATE**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 8:21:33 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
D Y	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Keep smut and perversions out of the hand's, eyes, and mind's of children. It doesn't belong in libraries. You weren't put in place for this. Do good for the people - this is not it. Wake up.

**LATE**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 8:30:23 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Daphne (Delta) Westcot	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

This bill is important for libraries as all books should be made available to patrons and no books ever banned.

**LATE**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 8:38:00 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Cassie Price	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill!

**LATE**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 8:43:30 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Celine Chang	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Chairpersons and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for the bill that requires the Department of Education to uphold the fundamental right to read. This bill is essential to safeguarding the intellectual freedom of students and educators in our schools. I firmly believe that it is crucial to protect the right to access diverse books and materials, ensuring that all students have the opportunity to engage with a wide range of ideas and perspectives.

The right to read is a cornerstone of our democratic society. It allows individuals to explore different cultures, viewpoints, and experiences, fostering critical thinking, empathy, and intellectual curiosity. In a world that is increasingly interconnected and diverse, it is vital that our education system reflects and nurtures this diversity. This bill guarantees that students will have access to materials that promote learning, self-discovery, and personal growth—free from unnecessary restrictions or censorship.

One of the key provisions of this bill is the prohibition on excluding books based on arbitrary criteria such as race, gender, religion, or political views. This sends a clear message that education should not be shaped by narrow, biased perspectives, but rather should be guided by educational merit, relevance to students' development, and the promotion of intellectual freedom. By preventing the exclusion of books based on subjective biases, we allow students to access a broader spectrum of ideas that will help them better understand the world around them.

Another important aspect of this bill is the role of the State Librarian in selecting materials for school library collections. The State Librarian's responsibility to uphold the freedom to read is essential to maintaining a robust and diverse library collection. Materials should be selected based on clear, fair, and transparent criteria that prioritize educational value, relevance, and intellectual enrichment. This ensures that students are not deprived of access to important resources due to political, social, or personal pressures.

The bill also appropriately limits the ability of both the Department of Education and the State Librarian to exclude books from school libraries for arbitrary or biased reasons. By preventing censorship based on controversial topics, we help create an environment in which students are encouraged to engage with challenging ideas and viewpoints, fostering open-mindedness and a deeper understanding of the complexities of the world.

In conclusion, I believe that this bill is a vital step in protecting the freedom to read for all students. By upholding the right to access diverse materials and preventing censorship based on subjective criteria, we ensure that students are empowered to think critically, engage with different ideas, and grow into informed, empathetic, and thoughtful individuals.

I strongly urge you to support this bill and take a stand in favor of the freedom to read.

Mahalo,

Celine

**LATE**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 8:43:42 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sara Cook	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha Chairperson and Members of the Committee,

I strongly support **SB799**, which upholds the fundamental **freedom to read** and ensures that students and the public have equitable access to diverse books and materials in Hawaii’s libraries.

Intellectual freedom is a cornerstone of democracy, and school and public libraries play a crucial role in fostering critical thinking, open inquiry, and lifelong learning. By prohibiting the removal or exclusion of books based on ideological, religious, or partisan disapproval, this bill ensures that all individuals—regardless of background or belief—have access to a broad range of perspectives.

Across the country, we have seen an alarming rise in book challenges, disproportionately targeting works that amplify diverse voices and histories. **SB799** protects Hawaii’s educators, librarians, and students from censorship efforts that restrict access to knowledge and limit the opportunity for independent thought.

As an educator, I strongly believe that students should have the freedom to engage with books that challenge, inspire, and reflect the rich diversity of our world. **I urge you to pass SB799 to safeguard the right to read and affirm Hawaii’s commitment to intellectual freedom.**

Mahalo for your time and consideration.

Sara Cothren Cook, PhD

Waikoloa, HI

**LATE**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 9:07:46 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Lolita Keni	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill! This bill is wrong and disgusting! Why are you(government) trying to groom our children? Children are curious as is, they do not need to learn about sex this way! I consider you(government) pedophiles, in wanting to push this! You're wanting to see our children as easier targets, as they seeking out what are in these books. I oppose we allow the BOE and librarians, the sole right in deciding what books are to be in OUR libraries. We are the tax payers, your are not going to be using OUR tax money to push such disgust.

**LATE**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 9:18:13 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Phebe Kahoiwai	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I oppose this bill.

I feel that any material relating or exposing children to pornography of the sort as educational purposes should not be allowed on school campuses. Allowing pornographic content that include sexually explicit and detailed acts should not be allowed for children under the age of 18 to read in a school library. This is psychologically damaging to innocent children minds. Content of these nature should be approved by children's parents. It should also be rated accordingly on the type of content included in such materials.

Thank you for your consideration on this matter.



**LATE**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 9:59:30 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Chris Coffeen	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

**I support this measure because individuals have the right to free inquiry and a right to form their own opinions.**

**LATE**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 10:08:17 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Expedita Pasion	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I strongly oppose SB799

**LATE**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 10:09:31 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
stacy diaz (zoom display SD)	Individual	Oppose	Remotely Via Zoom

Comments:

I, Stacy Diaz oppose bill SB799.

**LATE**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 10:14:09 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Cynthia Cadiz	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

My comments on SB799. There is a difference between "freedom to read" and appropriate context. Porn is NOT APPROPRIATE for anyone to have access to in a library or any setting. Ask yourself if this SB799 bill is necessary for the betterment of ALL or ANY human citizen. Don't label this SB799 bill FREEDOM TO READ. To label it as such is ludicrous. Just simply ask yourself if this is necessary for anyone to have access to.

**LATE**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 10:16:16 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Testify
James Solleder	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha and Good day, Members of the Legislature of the Great State of Hawaii!

I am not an activists, nor have I been radicalized by the events which have taken place since the November 2024 election. However I have begun taking notice. My testimony today is to express my support, and to encourage all members of this body, to support SB799 as introduced by Members Rhoads and Chang.

I was first made aware of this bill by a social media post which claimed that it was introduced in order to allow school libraries to have 'porn' available for children. I recognized this not only as an absurd assertion, but also as an attempt to shock and outrage. However, the only outrage it caused in me was towards the persons who posted it.

Freedom to Read materials labeled as "not approved" is a fundamental Right in the USA. Many of our founders writings would have been (and were) banned by the English Monarchy in the years leading to our Revolution. Those same people who today espouse 'Freedom' and 'Liberty' would be the first ones rounded up in the 1770's.

Those who made the post on social media make the outrageous claim this Bill supports 'pornography' when in fact all it does is make it more difficult for the loud, vacuous minority to force their views on others. They are 'afraid' of gender affirming literature. They are afraid of literature which goes against their religious beliefs. They are afraid of authors who create books that tell marginalized children that they are ok, that help is available, and that they have Rights to do and be who they really are. They are afraid of books which show the dark underbelly of humanity, likely because they thrive on the fear and intimidation found there.

I ask that this Body indulge me for a few moments to share a personal anecdote. Before I moved to Hawaii, I worked for a Fortune 100 company located in Memphis, TN. The man who hired me was named Jerry. He was intelligent, witty, and generally a fun person to be around. A few months before he hired me he had "come out of the closet", at age 52. Our department of 12 split upon hearing this news, so basically I was hired into a battle field. Jerry had had a family, a wife and a son, and an infant grandchild. For obvious reasons, his wife and son felt betrayed and cut him from their lives. He was forbidden to see his grandchild.

Jerry's life began to spiral out of control. He began missing work. After several months of this, he was demoted from management and moved to an area in the company known as being a 'hell-

hole'. He came to work just a time or two afterwards and then just stopped showing up. Ultimately he was fired. He committed suicide a few weeks later. His wife and mother had him buried with no visitation, no graveside ceremony. Gone and forgotten and good riddance.

Jerry was raised in a very conservative location in the USA. He was raised in a very strict religious family. His wife was also very strict, and had ensured their son was raised in a similar belief system.

Jerry lived in a time and a location where being homosexual was treated as a crime and a sin. Once he was able to be honest with himself about who he really was, his expressing it destroyed the lives of his wife and his son. There is a grandchild who will never know what a good, funny, intelligent person their grandfather was, because he will not be discussed with that child. There is a woman who likely will never fully trust a man again. There is a son who will always carry bitterness in his heart over his father's 'betrayal' as well.

All of this tragedy could have been avoided if Jerry had been allowed to be who he really was, and who he **knew** he was since before puberty. Instead, he was forced to conform, which forced him to lie to himself and ultimately to his family.

Now please ask yourselves, "Will this Bill help prevent more Jerrys and his tragic life"? Because that to me is what it comes down to.

Those opposed to this Bill will attempt to paint it as evil. These same people will likely insist that the Judeo-Christian Bible be included in all school libraries. But they will be doing so for the wrong reasons. Anyone who has actually read the Bible knows that it contains far worse things for children to read about, including Genocide, rape, murder, infanticide, and incest.

Obviously, some books should be 'age-appropriate'. As an example, "To Kill A Mockingbird" should not be read to first graders. But it needs to be available for sixth-graders. And I trust the Department of Education and the Library system to make those decisions.

I do NOT trust the opponents of this Bill at all. And neither should any member of this Body.

Respectfully submitted with Aloha,

James Solleder

**LATE**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 10:57:20 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Krystal Kakimoto	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I would like to submit my testimony in support of SB799.

**LATE**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 10:57:21 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
William Smith	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments: The bill is unnecessary legislation. It is already within the scope of responsibilities of the qualified librarian to limit objectionable material being entered into the library. Please withdraw the bill. Please concentrate senate efforts instead on efficiency and cost reductions in the government.



**LATE**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 11:09:30 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Sarah-Lyn Lokelani Jacobson	Individual	Oppose	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

I OPPOSE THIS BILL! THIS TYPE OF MATERIAL SHPULD NOT BE ON OUR CHILDRENS SCHHOLS.

**LATE**



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Executive Director

### **TESTIMONY TO THE HAWAI'I SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

Item: **SB 799 - Freedom to Read**

Position: **SUPPORT**

Hearing: **2/10/2025, Conference Room 229, 3:02pm**

Submitter: **Osa Tui, Jr. – President, Hawai'i State Teachers Association**

Chair Kidani, Vice Chair Kim, and members of the committee,

The Hawai'i State Teachers Association stands in **strong support** of SB 799 which would require the Department of Education and State Librarian to 1) select materials for inclusion, circulation, and exclusion in school library collections, 2) uphold the freedom to read, 3) prohibit excluding books based on certain criteria.

Our HSTA members have seen what's been happening on the continent with classroom libraries being censored or even taken away. We've seen other states where people who have never stepped foot in public school classrooms, are making reading decisions for students. This censorship undermines the fundamental tenets of public education that we value in Hawai'i, and has no place here.

The Hawai'i State Teachers Association asks your committee to **support** this bill.

**LATE**

**SB-799**

Submitted on: 2/10/2025 11:48:28 AM

Testimony for EDU on 2/10/2025 3:02:00 PM

<b>Submitted By</b>	<b>Organization</b>	<b>Testifier Position</b>	<b>Testify</b>
Torrey Lock	Individual	Support	Written Testimony Only

Comments:

Aloha,

Please vote in SUPPORT of SB799 to guarantee access to books to ensure equal education and representation for all. The targeted removal of these books is a calculated assault against diversity and empathy, and reflects a sour history of the Hawaiian culture and language being outlawed. While those opposed to the freedom to read paint many of these books as pornographic, they are valuable learning tools for many students. Many books on race are also targeted, further othering racial minorities in classrooms and the community. Access to books on LGBTQ+ lifestyle and health, as well as age-appropriate books on sexuality are factually known to reduce STIs, unwanted pregnancies, sexual assault, and suicide. Removing these books from student access puts vulnerable communities at further risk, by removing life saving information from them, and leaving there peers uninformed and unaware of their struggles. Complete, age-appropriate education is the key to a healthy, sustainable, empathetic society thay benefits us all.

Mahalo,

Torrey Lock

Waialua, 96791